

Resource: Familiarization, Internalization, Articulation (Fia)

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Familiarization, Internalization, Articulation (Fia)

1CO

1 Corinthians 1:1–9

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 1:1–9 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:1–9 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:1–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul is most likely in Ephesus. He is regularly receiving news from his friends in Corinth. Chloe, Stephanos, and Apollos tell him how the believers in the church in Corinth are doing. They bring news about divisions and problems in the church, and they bring questions from the believers in the church. Paul has written to the members in the church in Corinth several times, and he decides to write to them again because the believers do not seem to fully understand the things Paul has taught them.

Paul begins his letter like most people began letters in that part of the world at that time. He reminds them of who he is and who he is writing to. Then Paul thanks God for the believers in the church in Corinth. Even in his greeting, though, Paul begins to mention the subjects he will talk about more deeply later in the letter. Paul has received news that the Corinthians are proud because they think that they know more than other people know and speak better than other people speak. The Corinthians seem to think that they know more and speak better because of something good that they have done themselves.

Paul knows he must address these problems in the Corinthian church, so Paul begins this letter by reminding the Corinthians of Paul's role in the church. Paul is an apostle, or someone that Christ himself sent out to preach the good news, to start churches, and to help those churches learn how to act as a good group of believers. Because Christ himself sent the apostles, apostles had authority in the ancient church. Paul reminds them that God himself is the one who called or appointed Paul to be an apostle. Paul reminds the Corinthian church that

God himself is also the one who called the believers in Corinth to be God's saints, or holy people. When God appoints someone to do a task, that means that the people have a responsibility to complete the task. Paul wants to remind the believers in the church in Corinth that each of them has a responsibility as part of God's holy people to follow God's teachings and follow the way of Christ.

Paul says that he is with Sosthenes. We do not know what role Sosthenes has in this letter because Paul does not mention him again. Sosthenes may be somehow helping Paul with this letter, or he may just be one of Paul's companions right now in Ephesus. It is possible that Sosthenes was at one time the synagogue ruler in Corinth. You will remember from the story in Acts that the people beat up, or attacked, someone named Sosthenes in Gallio's court in Corinth. In any case, the Corinthians seem to know this Sosthenes because Paul calls him "the brother." Sosthenes must have been special to the Corinthians.

Although we do not hear anything more about Chloe in Scripture, we do hear in the next passage that someone named Chloe has come from Corinth and has probably given Paul news about the divisions in the church in Corinth. You will remember that a church is a gathered community of people who come together for a specific purpose. In the time of the New Testament, a church came together for the purpose of worshipping Christ Jesus. Paul is talking to the believers in Jesus who meet together as a church in Corinth. Immediately, Paul starts saying things that will remind the believers to see themselves as a united gathering. Paul starts by calling the church in Corinth the "church of God." In other words, Paul is saying that God himself owns the church in Corinth, just like God owns all churches. Churches are not owned by any specific human leader.

All the believers are therefore one group of people—God calls them all to be his special or holy people that he sets apart to worship him. We call these people God's "saints." We will later see that Paul compares God's holy people to temples, or places where God lives. Here, when Paul talks about the sanctified, or holy, believers, some of the Corinthians will remember how God sets apart certain utensils and items in the temple of God for his special use. Paul is telling the believers in Corinth that they are special people that God has set apart for himself. Then Paul reminds them that they are holy people together with all the people who call on Jesus' name, or follow Jesus. These followers of Jesus are "everywhere," not just in Corinth! Paul is already starting to remind the Corinthian believers that they are part of a larger group of believers—the Corinthian believers should not think that they are more special than other believers! *All* believers are special to God.

Paul formally greets the Corinthian believers. The normal greeting of the time in Greek, the language of Corinth, was "rejoice," which was a way to say "greetings!" or "hello!" But instead of saying "rejoice," Paul tells the believers what they should rejoice in. Paul greets them with the two joyful ideas of "grace and peace." God gives us grace, or is kind to us even though we do not deserve it. God gives us peace, which means that he makes us complete and gives us well-being in all parts of our lives. These are things to rejoice about! Even as Paul greets the believers in Corinth, he is reminding them that they have grace and peace, and they should rejoice in that!

Who gives us grace and peace? God does! God is both God the Father and he is our Lord, or master, Jesus Christ, our savior. Paul never forgets that Jesus is God and that Jesus works in cooperation with God to save us. Paul continually emphasizes that Jesus is important because he is our Savior. Paul calls him Christ Jesus, the title that reminds everyone that Jesus is our Savior.

Paul continues to follow the pattern of most letters of the time. Paul thanks God for the Corinthians. Paul tells them that he thanks God for them because God has given them grace, or undeserved kindness. Paul will go on to talk about the spiritual gifts that God has given the believers. Because these believers did not earn these gifts from God, and because God was kind to give them these gifts, Paul often talks about spiritual gifts and grace with the same kind of language. Spiritual gifts are something to be thankful for!

Even as Paul thanks God for the Corinthian believers, he begins to address the problems in the Corinthian church. Sometimes, when people receive a gift from God, they can use the gift unwisely, think that they deserve the gift, or think that the gift comes from their own talents or strength. Our greatest gifts can become like our greatest challenges. Paul reminds the Corinthians that they have indeed received God's grace in the form of spiritual gifts. These gifts allow people to perform the acts of God and have God's character. Two of these gifts are knowledge and the ability to speak beautifully. Paul reminds the Corinthians that these gifts come directly from God himself. The Corinthians did not earn these gifts, and they only have these gifts because God was kind enough to give the gifts to the Corinthian believers. Paul does not say it here, but he is probably reminding the Corinthians that the gift of knowing a lot of things is not something they should boast about. In fact, although

the Corinthians have many spiritual gifts from God, they are still not perfect. The Corinthians should be hoping for, or confidently expecting, that their gifts will be made complete in the last day when Jesus comes back. Then the Corinthian believers will no longer do anything wrong, and they will be totally strong in their faith.

Paul ends in a beautiful statement of thanksgiving and worship. God is faithful. He loves us so much that he has called us into a strong relationship with Jesus. Jesus is not just anyone, he is God's son, and he is the Christ, the one who saves us from being prisoners to sin!

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:1–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has 3 parts.

In the first part: Paul greets the believers in the church in Corinth. He describes who he is, describes who they are, and formally greets them.

In the second part: Paul thanks God for the believers in the church in Corinth and tells them why Paul thanks God for the Corinthians.

In the third part: Paul praises God because Paul knows that he can trust God to give the believers in Corinth strength and to bring them into a good relationship with God's son, Jesus Christ.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Sosthenes
- The believers in the church in Corinth
- God the Father
- Lord Jesus Christ

This passage is the beginning of the letter from Paul to the believers in the church in Corinth. In those times, most people wrote letters by saying their letter out loud to someone else who wrote it down. Many times more than one person worked on a letter together and then together told someone else what to write down. Then, one of the people who helped compose the letter or write it down would take the letter to the people. They might hold the written letter in their hands when they read it to the church, but they would perform the letter out loud more than just read the letter.

Stop here and discuss this as a group: What do you need to think about as you translate this letter now that you know that someone read it out loud to all the believers in Corinth together? How will you change the way you translate, or the words you use, as you think about this? Pause this audio here.

Paul's letter to the Corinthians begins like most letters of the time period. Paul begins with the normal information about the author and audience. The information Paul gives is special because the information is also spiritual. Paul reminds his audience of the gospel message in his greetings and thanksgiving.

In the first part of the letter, Paul names himself as the writer and who he's writing to. After that, Paul gives a formal greeting. Paul makes it clear that God willed or wanted Paul to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. Paul mentions a man named Sosthenes, but he does not make it clear what role Sosthenes had. Paul does not say if Sosthenes helped write the letter or if Sosthenes carried and read the letter. All we know is that Paul called Sosthenes "our brother." Paul and the believers in Corinth seemed to know and respect Sosthenes.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Here Paul calls one man his "brother." Paul also calls other believers "brothers and sisters" several times in this letter to show that he loves them and that all the believers are like one family

together, with God as their father. What do you call each other as believers? What would be a good title to use in 1 Corinthians for fellow believers, both men and women? Pause this audio here.

Then Paul changes his focus to describe his audience. He calls them the "church of God in Corinth." The church refers to a group of people, not to a building. Paul is talking to each person who gathers together in Corinth to worship God together. Jesus sanctifies, or makes holy and special, these believers in Jesus. Jesus calls these people to be holy, or set apart for God's special purposes. And they are not alone! These believers are part of a group of people from everywhere in the world who call on the name of our Lord, or master, Jesus Christ. If someone calls on the name of someone, then they trust and follow that person. They also worship him. Jesus Christ is both the master, or Lord, of the Corinthian believers and the Lord of all the believers everywhere.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you talk about a group of people who are trusting, following, and worshipping someone? How will you talk about all the believers in the world calling on the name of Jesus Christ? Pause this audio here.

After Paul says who he is and who he is writing to, he says, "Hello!" to the people. In those days, people said hello by saying "Rejoice!" to each other. Paul takes this basic greeting of "rejoice" and makes it into a description of the things that people should be joyful about. Paul says, "Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, our savior." God and his son Jesus gave us grace and peace. This is important because God is the creator of all things, and God made his son Jesus our master and our savior. The people knew Jesus was our master because Paul calls him Lord, and they knew that Jesus was the one who saved us from the consequences of our sin because Paul calls him Christ. God and Jesus gave us grace. In other words, they were kind to us even when we did not deserve it. God and Jesus gave us peace. In other words, they made our life complete and whole. We live in harmony with God and with other people. The greeting "grace and peace" became a standard greeting between believers in Paul's time.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you use "grace and peace" as a greeting in your language? Pause this audio here.

In the second part of the letter, Paul continues to follow the structure of the formal letters of his time. Paul says that he always gives thanks for the Corinthian believers. This just means that Paul very often thanks God for the people he is writing to. Paul is thankful because God has been very kind to them by giving them many spiritual gifts. This is grace. The Corinthians did not deserve for God to be kind to them or for God to give them gifts. The Corinthians received these things only because they follow Christ Jesus. This is the meaning of the phrase "grace in Christ Jesus."

Paul explains in more detail how God shows the Corinthian believers his grace, or kindness. Paul says that just like a wealthy person has a lot of money or riches, believers receive a lot of kindness. It is like the believers are rich with God's kindness! The Corinthian believers receive messages from God. The Corinthian believers receive knowledge about spiritual things from God. This is how God confirms to people that the Corinthians really are followers of Jesus!

Paul is thankful that the Corinthian believers do not lack any spiritual gifts! In other words, together, the believers in the church have every spiritual gift from God. The people in the Corinthian church are able to use their spiritual gifts, and they are happy even though they have to wait for the day our master and savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, will come back. On that day, God will show everyone who Jesus is. Paul is thankful that Jesus will continue to give strength to the Corinthian believers as they wait for that day. What kind of strength do the Corinthian believers need? They need to remain without guilt. In other words, they need to continue to trust Jesus until the day God reveals to everyone that Jesus is our Lord and savior.

In the third part of the letter, Paul praises God. He summarizes his introduction by saying that God is faithful. God will do everything that he said he will do. God called each one of the Corinthian believers into fellowship or relationship with Jesus. This does not just mean to know who Jesus is or to eat together with him like believers might eat together in church. When we fellowship with Jesus, we are brothers and sisters with Jesus. We work alongside Jesus, and we receive power, strength, and love from Jesus. We can trust God. We can confidently know that God is the one who called us to be part of his family with his son Jesus.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. You may want to use objects or people to show Paul, Sosthenes, the believers in the church in Corinth, God the Father,

and our Lord Jesus Christ. As Paul greets the believers and describes why he thanks God for them, have the believers or objects do the things that Paul says they do. Show the Corinthian believers being firm or strong. Then show the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, when Christ returns. Show how God is faithful, and show how God calls the Corinthian believers into fellowship. You may do this by having the person or object playing God bring together all the believers to Jesus.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has 3 parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Sosthenes
- The believers in the church in Corinth
- God the Father
- Lord Jesus Christ

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul is speaking to someone who is writing down what he says. Sosthenes is with Paul. As Paul speaks and the person writes down what he says, the believers in Corinth are acting out what Paul is saying.

Paul says, "I'm Paul, and God called me to be an apostle that goes out to share about Jesus Christ. Sosthenes is here too. I'm writing to each of you in the church of God in Corinth. Christ Jesus has set you apart for himself, and he has called you to be his special people. You belong to a group of people throughout the world who also call Jesus their master and Savior—our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the believers in the church in Corinth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "Wow! I am in awe. I had never realized just how much God thought I was special," or
- "I'm confused. Who are all the other followers of Jesus around the world? How do we fit in with them?"

Paul greets the people. He says, "Grace and peace from our Father God and our Lord Jesus Christ. I am so thankful for you because God has been kind to you even though you didn't deserve it. He was kind to you

because you followed Jesus as savior, or Christ. He has given you such great treasures of the gifts of speaking beautifully and of having knowledge. This shows me that you are really following Christ! You are eagerly waiting for God to show you more about our Lord Jesus Christ, and God is giving you every spiritual gift you need while you wait! These gifts are helping you to follow God well until that day when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am heartbroken for the Corinthians. I think they do not understand how much God loves them. That's why they all have to boast and try to be better than each other. I hope they hear what I am saying to them," or
- "I am frustrated because these believers think that these gifts are coming from their own abilities!"

Ask the person playing the believers in the church in Corinth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "Of course Paul is saying good things about us! We deserve it!" or
- "I am angry that Paul would say that these gifts come from God! I am very smart, and I can speak beautifully! Why didn't Paul talk about how smart I am?"

Paul finishes and says, "God always does what he says he will do. God has called you to work together and be a part of the community of God's son, Jesus our savior and master!"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "God is good. I am unsure if God will really change these people, but I am trying to trust that God is faithful and will change them," or
- "I am only saying this because I know it is true, but I do not like that God still calls people like this to be in fellowship with him! I am angry with the Corinthians because of the reports I have heard, but I am going to try to see them the way God sees them."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:1–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul begins his letter to the believers in the church in Corinth by identifying himself as an **apostle**. An apostle is someone whom Jesus appointed to speak on Jesus' behalf and with Jesus' authority. Paul had seen Jesus, and Jesus had told Paul to go tell the good news about Jesus to many people.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **apostle**. If you have translated apostle in another book of the Bible, use the same word here. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about apostle. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that **Christ** Jesus appointed, or called, him. Christ is a title for Jesus that reminds the believers that Jesus is the Messiah, or the savior and king that God appointed to come and rescue his people from the consequences of their sin and set in place God's kingdom.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **Christ**. If you have translated Christ in another book of the Bible, use the same word here. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about Christ. Pause this audio here.

Christ **called**, or appointed, Paul. When someone calls someone, they are inviting someone or crying out loudly. In this passage, Christ invites and chooses Paul to be his apostle.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **called**. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that he is writing to the **church** of God in Corinth. The Bible authors never use church to mean a building. Instead, church in the Bible is a community of people who believe in Jesus. Sometimes Paul uses the word church in this letter for a group of believers in one particular place, and sometimes Paul uses church to mean all the people on earth together who believe in Jesus.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **church**. If you have translated church in another book of the Bible, use the same word here. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about church. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the people in the church in Corinth are **sanctified** and that God calls them to be his **saints**, or people that God has called to be holy, or set apart, for him. Saints belong to God because they follow Jesus. Jesus sanctifies people when he makes them holy, or when he calls them his special people. God's special people follow God, and because of that, they want to act in a way that pleases God.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **sanctify**. If you have translated sanctify in another book of the Bible, use the same word here. Refer to sanctification in the Master Glossary for more information about sanctify. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **saints**, or holy people. If you have translated saints or holy people in another book of the Bible, use the same words here. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about saints. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the people in the church in Corinth call on the name of the **Lord** Jesus Christ. Lord is a title for Jesus that means that Jesus is our master who has all authority over us. We follow what Jesus tells us to do.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **Lord**. If you have translated Lord in another book of the Bible, use the same word here. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about Lord. Pause this audio here.

Paul greets the people in the church in Corinth with the words "**grace** and **peace**." Paul is reminding the believers that God gives them grace, or that God is kind to them even though they do not deserve it. God gives them peace, or gives them harmony with himself and with each other.

Stop here and discuss what words or phrases you will use for **grace** and **peace**. If you have translated grace and peace in another book of the Bible, use the same word here. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about grace and peace. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that God has given the people in the church in Corinth all **knowledge**. Paul is saying that God has given the believers all kinds of information about God and how God's Spirit works in the world.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **knowledge**. If you have translated this kind of knowledge in another book of the Bible, use the same word here. Pause this audio here.

God has given the believers in Corinth the ability to speak well and to know many things about God. This fact confirms that the message, or **testimony**, about Christ was true. When a person gives a testimony, they declare the truth about something. The gifts that God gave the Corinthian believers acted like a testimony that proved that the message about Christ really was true.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **testimony**. If you have translated testimony in another book of the Bible, use the same word here. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about testimony. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that God has given the people in the church in Corinth every **spiritual gift** while they are waiting for God's full and final **revelation** of our Lord Jesus Christ. These spiritual gifts, or gifts that God's Spirit gives us, allow people to do the acts of God and have God's character. God will give us a revelation of who Jesus really is. Revelation is similar to prophecy. When God gives a revelation, he gives us special knowledge that might be surprising, very wonderful, or that very few people know.

Stop here and discuss what words or phrases you will use for **spiritual gifts** and **revelation**. Discuss how you will translate this idea that the Corinthian believers did not lack, or had all, the spiritual gifts to help them as they waited for God to reveal everything about our Lord Jesus Christ. If you have translated spiritual gifts or revelation in another book of the Bible, use the same words here. Gifts and revelation are in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that God will make the people in the church in Corinth blameless, or without guilt. This means that they will continue to trust in and follow Jesus.

God is **faithful** to keep us in **fellowship**, or communion, with his son Jesus. In other words, God will continue to do all the things he said that he would do. God will unite us with his son Jesus.

Stop here and discuss what words or phrases you will use for **faithful** and **fellowship**. If you have translated faithful and fellowship in another book of the Bible, use the same words here. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for his son, Jesus. Jesus is the **son of God**. If you have translated son of God in another book of the Bible, use the same phrase here. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about son of God.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 1:1–9

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1 Corinthians 1:10–17

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 1:10–17 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:10–17 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:10–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the last part of his letter, Paul began with a short introduction. Paul reminded the believers that they are unified, or one, under God's authority, not the authority of different human leaders. Paul also reminded the church how God gives them spiritual gifts, including gifts to speak beautifully and with knowledge. Because God gives these gifts, the believers should not be proud, but thankful.

In this part of his letter, Paul will begin to talk about some of the things that people in the Corinthian church are doing wrong. First, Paul will tell the believers why they must stop dividing up to follow different human leaders. Second, Paul will begin to remind the believers that the power of the gospel is not in wise-sounding words, but in Christ himself.

Paul begins by strongly asking the believers to agree with each other and to stop dividing up to follow different leaders and ideas. Instead, Paul asks them to be united, or in agreement, in what they think. Paul does not mean everyone has to think the exact same thing about every topic. What Paul is saying is that the believers must agree about the basic truths of the gospel of Christ and Christ's death on the cross.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your community, what are some important things that most people can agree about, such as traditions, religious beliefs, or laws? What are some things that many people disagree about? Which kinds of things are most important for people to agree about in order to live and work together well? Pause this audio here.

Paul now explains how he has heard about people dividing up in the church. Paul says that Chloe's household told Paul that people in the church are quarreling, or arguing. We do not know who Chloe is, because we do not hear about her anywhere else in Scripture. However, because of the way Paul talks about Chloe, we do not think Chloe's household was part of the church in Corinth, but perhaps traveled to Corinth and later told Paul what they saw happening there.

Paul now explains what he means by "quarreling." Paul says that each person says, "I am of Paul," or, "I am of Apollos," or, "I am of Cephas," or, "I am of Christ." From the way Paul writes this, we are not sure if he literally means that every person in the church uses these exact words or is equally divided. But Paul does make it very clear that those who argue are causing the church to split apart to follow different leaders and ideas. We know that Paul was the first person to come to Corinth and teach people the gospel about Christ. Apollos has continued to teach people in Corinth after Paul left. And Cephas is one of Jesus' 12 apostles, also known as Peter. We are not sure if Peter visited Corinth, but from the things Paul said, it is likely people in the church knew about Peter.

Paul now asks three different questions that he does not expect the Corinthian believers to answer. Paul says, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" With the first question, "Is Christ divided?" Paul seems to be saying that just like the church would not tear apart Christ's physical body, they must not tear apart or divide the church, which is Christ's spiritual body. With the second question, "Was Paul crucified for you?" Paul is saying that only Christ was crucified for the believers. They should follow Christ, not human leaders like Paul. And with the third question, "Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" Paul reminds the believers that they all received baptism into the same name of Christ. When people took baptism during that time, they showed that they belonged to a certain group that followed a certain teacher. So if they take baptism in the name of Christ, that means they now belong to Christ. This too shows why they must all follow Christ alone instead of separate human leaders.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about an important community leader who had several people who worked for that leader. Tell how the people in the community started listening to the different people who worked for the leader more than they listened to the leader himself. Pause this audio here.

Paul says he is glad that the only people Paul baptized in Corinth were Crispus and Gaius, because that way people cannot brag that Paul baptized them. Then, as if Paul suddenly remembered someone else, Paul writes that he also baptized Stephanas' household. However, Paul says he does not remember baptizing anyone else in Corinth. Paul probably only baptized the very first believers when he came to a new city, and then allowed other people to baptize other new believers after that. Later in this letter, we learn that Stephanas' household were the first people to become Christians in the region around Corinth. Crispus was probably the synagogue leader in Corinth who converted to Christianity early in Paul's ministry there. Gaius was a wealthy member of the church whose home was used for church meetings.

Now Paul explains why he did not baptize more people in Corinth himself. Paul says that Christ did not send Paul to baptize, but to preach the gospel. Notice here that Paul emphasizes that *Christ* sent Paul. Paul is reminding the believers that even though Paul came to Corinth, it was Christ who sent Paul. It is Christ who the Corinthians should follow. Paul is not saying that baptism is unimportant. However, the purpose of baptism is

to show that believers follow Christ alone. The purpose of baptism is not to show that believers follow the human leaders who do the baptizing.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a leader who spoke or wrote out an important message, and then sent someone else to take that message to another place. Tell how the words in the message were the leader's own ideas, even though the messenger spoke them. Pause this audio here.

Paul also says Christ did not send Paul to preach with words of human wisdom, or clever speech. Here, Paul is saying people should follow Christ because of Christ's death on the cross for them. Christ's death itself has power to save us. When people speak with smart-sounding words, they don't have power to save us. In the Greek and Roman culture in Corinth at this time, people who wanted to be leaders would learn to speak to large groups of people with words that sounded very wise or smart. So people would have expected Paul to speak in this way too. However, Paul is saying that he spoke very simply about Christ and the gospel so that people would follow Christ instead of Paul.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:10–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul appeals to, or strongly asks, the Corinthians to stop dividing up into different groups. Instead, Paul asks the believers to come together as one church that agrees about the important truths of the gospel of Christ.

In the second part: Paul says he has heard that the believers are arguing, saying how they belong to specific people like Paul, Apollos, Peter, or Christ. Paul asks three questions he does not expect the Corinthians to answer. Paul does this in order to show how the Corinthian believers are not acting in a way that makes sense. Paul asks, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" The answer to each question is obviously, "No!"

In the third part: Paul says he is glad that he only baptized Crispus, Gaius, and Stephanas' household in Corinth. Most people in Corinth cannot brag that Paul baptized them. Paul says Christ did not send Paul to baptize people, but to preach the gospel about Christ. And Paul says he did not preach with clever words so that Christ's death on the cross does not lose its power.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers in the church in Corinth
- Lord Jesus Christ
- Apollos
- Cephas, or Peter
- And Crispus, Gaius, and Stephanas' household

Paul begins this part of his letter by calling the Corinthian believers, "brothers and sisters." He also appeals to them, or strongly asks them to do something, using the phrase, "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." These special words remind the believers of their close relationship with Paul, and they also show that Paul is making an official request using authority from God, their Father.

Paul specifically asks the believers to put themselves in agreement with each other. Paul says not to quarrel, but to be united in how they think and speak. Paul is not saying the believers must all be the same as each other in every way, but Paul does want them to have the same thoughts and purposes in following Christ.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you make it clear in your translation that Paul is saying the believers must be united, or together as one, in how they talk about and follow Christ? If needed, refer back to your conversation in script two to see what words you used to describe how people can agree and work together. Pause this audio here.

Paul begins the second part with a particular word. In the original language, Paul uses a word to show that what he is about to say is because of what he just said. Paul says that people in Chloe's household told him how the believers in Corinth are quarreling. A household is everyone who lives in a person's house.

The people in Chloe's household told Paul that the Corinthians are saying things like, "I am of Paul," or, "I am of Apollos," or, "I am of Cephas," or, "I am of Christ." In the original language, these groups are saying that they belong to each of these men. Remember that this is what Paul says Chloe's household told Paul. We do not know if Paul means that everyone used these exact words. Perhaps Paul means that these are the kinds of things people are saying. In the original language, Paul emphasizes the word "I" in each of these statements. Instead of acting as one people, Paul is showing how each person tries to make the individual look more important than other people. Paul is showing how each person is not making Christ the most important.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you make it clear in your translation that Paul is showing how the believers are bragging, or acting proud, with their words? How will you make it clear that each person is trying to make themselves look more important than other people? Pause this audio here.

Paul now asks three different questions he does not expect the Corinthian believers to answer. Paul says, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" The obvious answer to each of these questions is, "Of course not!" Paul is trying to show the believers that the way they are acting makes no sense at all.

With the first question, Paul is saying that just as the believers would be horrified by the idea of tearing apart Christ's physical body, they should also be disgusted by anything that tears apart the church, which is Christ's spiritual body. Just like a body cannot stay alive when it is torn apart, so the church cannot be healthy and survive if people tear it apart.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Paul uses the word "divided" to describe the action of cutting or breaking apart the body into different parts. How will you describe this in your translation to make Paul's meaning clear? Pause this audio here.

Second, Paul is reminding the believers that Christ sent people like Paul to tell other people about Christ. People should follow Christ himself instead of the people who Christ sent.

Third, Paul is reminding the church that when people baptized each believer, they did not baptize them in the name of people like Paul. All believers are baptized in Christ's name. Each believer belongs to Christ, not to the people who baptized them.

In the third part of the passage, Paul says he thanks God that Paul only baptized Crispus and Gaius in Corinth. No one else can say Paul baptized them. Then, as if Paul suddenly remembers something else while he is still writing, Paul says he also baptized Stephanas' household. Paul says he does not remember baptizing anyone else. We do not know which people in the church were bragging about who baptized them. Paul wants to make it very clear that baptism is about following Christ, not about following different human leaders.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: When Paul says he also baptized Stephanas' household, he says this as if he remembered it after he said he only baptized Crispus and Gaius. So Paul is slightly changing, or correcting, what he first said. Remember that someone else is writing the words of the letter while Paul says these things aloud. How will you make it clear in your translation that Paul is correcting what he first said? Pause this audio here.

Paul explains that Christ did not send Paul to Corinth to baptize people. Instead, Christ sent Paul to preach the gospel. Paul's words were not of human wisdom, so that the cross of Christ would not be emptied of its power. Here, Paul is emphasizing a couple of important things. First, Paul wants the believers to know that human

wisdom cannot understand or explain how God works. Although "the cross of Christ" literally means the wooden cross on which Christ died, Paul is using this as special language to mean how Christ died to save the believers. Paul is saying that God shows his power to save us because Christ died on the cross and rose again. It is Christ's death on the cross, nothing else, that has saved us. There is no power to save us in the words people speak. Second, Paul wants the believers to understand that Paul did not tell the Corinthians about Christ so that people would think Paul was important, or so people would follow Paul. Instead, Paul told them so that they would follow Christ.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Paul uses the phrase, "the cross of Christ," to mean how Christ died on the cross. How will you make it clear in your translation that Paul is emphasizing how Christ's death is important, not that the wooden cross itself is important? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. You may want to use objects or people to show Paul, the believers in the church in Corinth, Christ, Apollos, Cephas or Peter, Crispus, Gaius, and Stephanas' household. As Paul appeals to the believers to stop dividing up into different groups, have the people playing the believers in the church pretend to quarrel and split apart. Then, as Paul strongly asks them to agree and come together as one, have the people come back together and pretend to be kind to each other. Next, as Paul describes how the people have been bragging about following different leaders, have the believers split up and gather separately around either Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or Christ while they pretend to brag to the other believers how their leader is best. Finally, as Paul asks the questions he does not expect the believers to answer, and Paul explains why the believers should only follow Christ, have all the believers, as well as Paul and Apollos and Peter, gather together around Christ.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers in the church in Corinth
- Lord Jesus Christ
- Apollos
- Cephas, or Peter
- And Crispus, Gaius, and Stephanas' household

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

To begin this passage, Paul says, "Brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, I strongly ask you to live in harmony with each other. Live together as one unified group. Have the same thoughts and purposes in Christ. Do not split up into competing groups."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I know some believers will not want to listen to me, because they say they follow someone else. But I need them to understand that I am not saying this in my own authority. I am saying what our Lord Jesus Christ wants me to say," or
- "I feel upset that people are arguing and not getting along. This is not how Christ taught us to live."

Paul continues, "Brothers and sisters, I say this because several people from Chloe's family told me how you are quarreling about which leader is best to follow. I am talking about how some of you claim to belong to me. Some others say they belong to Apollos. Others say that they belong to Peter. And still others say they belong to Christ. You *cannot* divide Christ in different parts! Remember, I was not the one who was crucified for you. And you were not baptized in the name of Paul!"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I feel frustrated with the believers for talking like this. This is not how the church should behave!" or
- "I feel surprised that people would think it is okay to act this way after all that I taught them about Christ," or
- "I am not sure how anyone would think they should follow me over Christ. That does not make sense at all!"

Ask the people playing the believers in the church, who Paul calls brothers and sisters, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We know Paul called us the body of Christ, but we did not realize how important it is to stay together as one people like Paul is saying," or
- "We feel embarrassed that Chloe's family told Paul how we have been bragging and quarreling," or
- "We respect Paul very much, but it is true that Paul has not died for us like Christ did."

Now Paul says, "I thank God that of you church members, I only baptized Crispus and Gaius. That way, not one of you can say you were baptized as my disciples. Oh yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanus, but I do not remember baptizing anyone else. For Christ sent me to tell you about the gospel, not to baptize people. And Christ did not send me to tell you with eloquent speech, or clever words, so that Christ's death on the cross would not be made powerless, or useless."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the believers in the church, who Paul calls brothers and sisters, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "It's true that Paul did not sound very eloquent or clever when he spoke about Christ," or
- "The way Christ died on the cross for us is very different from how human leaders act," or
- "Following Christ feels confusing sometimes. It is so different from how people follow human leaders!"

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I feel embarrassed that some of the believers are bragging about following me," or
- "I am so glad that I let other people baptize most of the believers. At least that way they cannot brag about that too," or
- "It is a good thing I was careful not to use clever-sounding speech when I told the people about the gospel. At least I know they followed Christ for the right reasons."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul begins this passage by **appealing** to the brothers in the church in Corinth. To appeal means to ask for something earnestly, or to strongly ask. When Paul calls the believers "brothers," he is saying that all the believers, both men and women, have the same God, who is their father. Paul does not mean these people are literally his brothers from the same human father. Some translations call these believers "brothers and sisters" to show that Paul is talking to all the believers, both men and women.

Stop here and discuss what words or phrases you will use for **appeal** and **brothers and sisters**. Although Paul does not use the word believers in this passage, look up believer in the Master Glossary for more information about this group of people. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words you used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul appeals to the believers in the name of the **Lord** Jesus **Christ**. Christ is a title for Jesus that reminds the believers that Jesus is the Messiah, or the savior and king that God appointed to come and rescue his people from the consequences of their sin. The Christ, or Messiah, will also set in place God's kingdom. A Lord is someone who is a master over other people, who has full authority, and who deserves for people to give him respect. When you address someone as "Lord," you are saying that person has authority over you. Look up Christ and Lord in the Master Glossary for more information. Use the same words for Christ and Lord that you used in the previous passage.

Paul strongly asks the believers not to be **divided**, which means to break into separate groups. Instead, Paul asks the believers to be **united**, which means to come together as one group of people with the same purpose.

Stop here and discuss what words or phrases you will use for **divisions** and **united**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words you used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul asks the believers to be united in **mind** and **thought**, or in the way they think. The words "mind and thought" mean almost the same thing. In some languages, it may be easier to use just one word to describe how people think.

Stop here and discuss what words or phrases you will use for **mind** and **thought**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words you used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says people in Chloe's household have told Paul what people in the church in Corinth are saying. A person's household means anyone who lives in that person's house. Some English translations say "Chloe's people" and others say "Chloe's household."

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for Chloe's **people** or Chloe's **household**. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about household. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word you used there. Pause this audio here.

People in Chloe's household told Paul that the believers in the church in Corinth are **quarreling**. To quarrel means to argue and to say bad things about each other.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **quarreling**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same words you used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that one of the people the believers are arguing about is **Cephas**. Cephas is another name for Peter, a fisherman who became one of Christ's 12 apostles and a leader of the early church.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **Cephas** or **Peter**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same words you used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul reminds the church that it was Christ who was **crucified** for the believers. Crucifixion was the Roman way of executing people. It was only used for slaves and the worst criminals. It was a very painful way to die. Crucifixion means that someone is nailed to a cross and then left to die.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **crucified**. Look up crucifixion in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same words you used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul also reminds the believers that they were **baptized** in the name of Christ. When someone in the New Testament baptized someone else, the first person put the second person in water to show that they had repented, or turned away from their sins and turned to God through believing in Jesus. Just before Jesus went back to heaven, he told his disciples to go and tell people everywhere that Jesus has all authority. Jesus also told them to make all people Jesus' disciples, and to baptize them in the name of the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a symbol that shows that our old life is dead and that we now belong to Jesus. We now have a new life because we belong to Jesus.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **baptized**. Look up baptism in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same words you used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says he did not preach with wisdom or eloquence. To preach means to tell the good news, or **gospel**, about the message that Christ died to rescue us from our sins. Here, eloquence means clever speech or wisdom that people show through speech. In the next few passages, Paul will talk about human **wisdom** and how it is different from God's wisdom. In this passage, Paul means he did not use human wisdom or speak in the eloquent or wise way that the Corinthians expected an important leader to speak.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **gospel** and for **wisdom**. Look up gospel and wisdom in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words you used there. Pause this audio here.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 1:10–17

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 1:18–25

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 1:18–25 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:18–25 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.

3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:18–25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the last part of his letter, Paul asked the believers in Corinth to stop quarreling and to instead come together as one church. Paul also reminded the believers that the power of the gospel is not in wise-sounding words, but in Christ himself.

In this part of his letter, Paul will begin to explain the difference between human wisdom and God's wisdom. At the very end of the last passage, Paul said that when he came to Corinth to tell people about Christ for the first time, Paul did not preach with clever words. Paul said he spoke that way so that Christ's death on the cross would not lose its power. Paul explains that the message about the cross seems foolish to people who do not believe. But although many people think this message is foolishness, Christ's death on the cross is actually the power of God to save those who believe.

To show he is telling the truth, Paul quotes from, or speaks words from, the book of the prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament. Paul says, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise. I will defeat their clever plans." You may remember that in the book that the prophet Isaiah wrote, God judged his people, the Israelites. The Israelites said words and followed rules as if they honored God, but they did not really follow God in their attitudes. In this part of the book of Isaiah, God judged the Israelites who planned to ask Egypt for help. The Israelites did not plan to ask God for help when enemies attacked the Israelites, so God used the Israelites' enemies to punish the Israelites. In this way, God "defeated their clever plans." Paul says that in the same way, God will defeat the human wisdom of people who do not believe in Christ.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell about a young child who wanted to act grown up and do things in their own way instead of asking their father or mother for help. Tell a story about how this child tried to solve a problem or do a difficult task with their own strength. What happened when it did not work? When the adult allowed the child to fail, what did the child learn? Pause this audio here.

Paul asks four questions he does not expect the Corinthian believers to answer. Paul says, "Where is the wise person? Where is the educated person? Where is the skilled talker of this world? Has not God made this world's wisdom foolish?" Paul is not trying to know where these people live, or where Paul can find these people. Paul is using these questions to show that people cannot know God and God's eternal plan using the world's wisdom. These people who the world calls wise are not wise according to God's thoughts and plans. God calls these people's ideas foolish nonsense.

Some Bible scholars think that the wise person Paul talks about might mean the Greek philosophers. The philosophers were people from Greece, the country where Corinth is. The philosophers used words and ideas that sounded important in order to try to explain how people should think about life and the world. Some Bible scholars also think that the educated person Paul talks about might be people who studied the Jewish, or Israelite, law. However, we do not know if Paul was thinking of specific types of people, because what Paul says can be true of anyone who people think sound wise.

Stop here as a group and look at a map of Greece that shows the city of Corinth. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about what kinds of people and actions people think of as wise in your culture. Now talk about what kinds of people and actions people think of as foolish in your culture. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that God's wisdom made it impossible for people to use their own wisdom to know God. Instead, God sent a message that the people of this world think is foolish in order to save people who believe that message.

Jews, or the Israelite people God chose to be God's own people, demand that people like Paul show them signs, or miracles, to prove that the gospel is true. And Greeks, meaning anyone in Corinth who is not a Jew, want people like Paul to explain the gospel using the wise-sounding talk they like to speak with. But Paul says that people like Paul only preach about Christ and Christ's crucifixion.

Paul says that Christ's crucifixion is a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, or anyone who is not a Jew. Paul means that the message about Christ and his death on the cross offends the Jews. The Jews followed the Old Testament and were waiting for a Messiah to come and save them. However, the Jews believed the Messiah would be a strong military leader to free them from their enemies. The Jews did not believe the Messiah would be a spiritual leader who would die in a shameful way like a criminal. So when people said that Jesus was the Messiah, this made the Jews very angry.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who waited for a long time for an exciting event to happen. What happened when the exciting thing happened? Was it exactly like the person had imagined? How did the person respond when it happened differently? Pause this audio here.

The gospel is a stumbling block and foolishness to the world's people. Paul says something different about God's people. To God's people, whether they are Jews or Greeks, Christ is God's power and God's wisdom. For even when God seems to act foolishly, he is still wiser than people. And even when God appears to be weak, he is still stronger than people. In other words, it looks foolish for God to send Christ to die on a cross. This makes God look weak. Paul says this is actually God's wisdom and power to save people who believe that God can save them through Christ.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:18–25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul says that the message about the cross seems foolish to people who do not believe, but it is actually God's power to save people. Paul quotes from the book of the prophet Isaiah, where God says he will destroy the clever plans of the wise. God has made people's wisdom seem foolish. God's wisdom made it impossible for people to use their own wisdom to know God. Instead, God sent a message that the people of this world think is foolish in order to save people who believe that message.

In the second part: Paul talks about two specific groups of people—the Jews and the Greeks. The Jews ask for signs, or miracles, and the Greeks only want to listen to wise-sounding words. Paul and others like him only talk about Christ who was crucified. This message is a stumbling block for Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. This message is God's power and wisdom to those who believe. For even when God seems to act foolishly, he is still wiser than people. And even when God appears to be weak, he is still stronger than people.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers in the church in Corinth
- People who do not believe in Christ
- God
- Christ
- The Jews, or Israelite people
- And the Greeks, or Gentiles

Paul begins by saying that the message about the cross seems like foolishness to people who are perishing, but to the people who believe, it is God's power. It is important to understand that when Paul says it is foolishness to those who are perishing, Paul does not mean it is actually foolish. When Paul says "those who are perishing," Paul means those who God will someday destroy because they do not believe in Christ. Paul means those people are not able to understand the meaning of the cross. Those who are perishing only think the cross is foolish. Paul means that the cross is actually true wisdom. It is also important to understand that the "power" that Paul talks about here does not mean physical power or strength. It specifically means that God did a very powerful thing when he sent Christ to die on the cross. When Christ died on the cross, he saved people from the punishment for their disobedience to God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you make it clear in your translation that Paul is not saying the cross is actually foolish, but only that nonbelievers think it is foolish? Pause this audio here.

Paul uses a phrase in the original language that some people translate as, "For it is written." This phrase means that the words that people wrote in Scripture confirm what Paul just said, and Paul is about to quote these words from Scripture. The quote is actually God's words that the prophet Isaiah wrote down. God says that he will destroy the wisdom of the wise people. Then God repeats the same idea in a different way. He says that he will thwart, or defeat, the clever plans of wise people. Isaiah wrote in this way because the language sounded beautiful and strong to the Jewish people. Isaiah wanted to emphasize that God is wiser than anyone else. If it is not natural in your language to talk about "destroying" wisdom, you may wish to say something like, "God will cause the wise men to lose their wisdom," or, "God will make the wisdom of the wise people useless."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you make it clear in your translation that Paul is quoting from Scripture to show that what he says is the truth? Pause this audio here.

Paul asks several questions he does not expect the believers to answer. Paul asks where the wise person is. Paul asks where the scribe or educated person is. Paul asks where the debater or the person who argues with skillful talk is. You will remember that Paul is not seeking the location of these people. Paul is using these questions to show that people cannot know God and God's eternal plan using the world's wisdom, or learning, or skillful talk. If you wish, you could combine these questions in your translation. For example, you could say, "So what do the wise people, or the scholars, or the skillful debaters of this world really know?" Also, if using questions to make a statement does not make sense in your language, you could change the questions into statements. For example, you could say, "The wise man has failed. The educated person has failed. The skilled talker has failed." In the same way, when Paul says, "Has not God turned the wisdom of this world into nonsense?" you could make this a statement by saying something like, "God has shown that this world's wisdom is foolishness!"

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your translation, how will you translate these questions? Will you translate them as questions or as statements? If you combine them, how will you show Paul is making a strong point? Pause this audio here.

Paul says, "For God wisely decided to make it impossible for people to know God using their own wisdom. Instead, God chose to save only those people who believe the foolish message we preach." Paul is not saying that human wisdom is evil. Paul is saying that people use it to do wrong things. People tried to know God in their own way, or with their own wisdom, instead of believing God's wisdom. God's wisdom is that Christ died on the cross to restore us to relationship with God. When Paul talks about people knowing God, he does not

mean just knowing about God. Everyone knows something about God. People who do not know and follow God's wisdom will perish, which means that God will destroy them. People who do not believe in Jesus Christ's death on the cross will perish. Remember that Paul is not saying that God's wisdom is actually foolish. Instead, Paul means that those who are perishing think it is foolish because they do not understand it.

In the second part, Paul begins to talk about Jews and Greeks. First, Paul says that Jews demand, or strongly ask for, signs to prove that the message about Christ is true. Another word for signs is miracles. Someone who performs a miracle makes an unusual and impossible thing happen. The Jews believed that if someone performed a sign, or miracle, it proved that the person was truly sent from God and was speaking the truth. You will remember that the religious leaders of the Jews often asked Jesus to perform signs to prove that he was the Messiah. Jesus strongly told the Jews that they were wrong to ask for signs.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: A sign is a miraculous event that people can see, which shows them that something is true. In your culture and language, what would be the best way to translate that the Jews asked Paul for signs? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that Greeks usually seek, or look and listen for, wisdom. Here Paul does not mean the wisdom of God that is Jesus Christ. Paul means the sort of important-sounding talk that the Greeks liked to use and listen to in their culture. Paul says that the Jews want to see signs, and the Greeks want to hear wise-sounding talk. Paul will not give signs or use skillful talk. Paul and others like him only preach about Christ's crucifixion, or death on the cross. Paul says God's message is a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. God has called some people, both Jewish people and Gentiles, to be part of his own people. When these people hear this message, they hear a message about Christ who reveals God's power and wisdom. Jews is another name for Israelites, and Gentiles are people who are not Jews. So anyone who was Greek, or was from the country of Greece, but was not also a Jew, was a Gentile.

The term "stumbling block" is special language that means a stone that people trip over. In other parts of his letter, Paul will talk more about this idea of "stumbling" or something causing people to fall, or turn away from God, in a way that destroys them. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament use this special language about stones to talk about spiritual ideas. For example, a "stone" might cause stumbling and destruction, or it might become a secure foundation. A secure foundation is the bottom part of a building. People build the rest of the building on top of the secure foundation. In this part of the world, traditionally people built buildings with stone, and the first thing they had to do was to lay a strong floor of stone on the ground before building up the walls and the rest of the building. So in this passage, Paul is saying that Christ and the cross are like a stone that God put on the ground. People might trip and fall over the stone. They are destroyed because they do not believe the message about Christ. Or people might build a house on the stone and stand strong in storms. They believe the message about Christ, which will cause them to be strong and live forever with God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: A stumbling block is something that people do not see, so they trip over it and fall down. How will you talk about this in your translation to make this idea clear? Pause this audio here.

In the end of the passage, Paul says that even if people think God is acting foolishly, God is wiser than people. And even if people think God looks weak, God is actually stronger than people.

Now the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. You may want to use objects or people to show Paul, the believers in the church in Corinth, God, Christ, the Jews or Israelite people, and the Greeks or Gentiles. As Paul describes how unbelievers think the cross is foolish, have that group point to Christ and laugh or act silly. Then as Paul describes the believers in the church, have Christ go over and protect the believers from God destroying them, but have God destroy the unbelievers. As Paul describes unbelievers trying to know God through their own wisdom, you can have God stand behind a barrier, like a low wall, that keeps people from getting to him. Have the unbelievers try to come up with a clever plan to get over the barrier, but show how they are not able to do it. Then have Christ help the believers cross over the barrier. Finally, as Paul talks about Christ and the cross being a stumbling stone for the Jews, have Christ sit or lie down on the ground. Have the Jews trip over Christ and fall down, but have the believers pretend to build a building on top of Christ where they can live and be safe.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:18–25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers in the church in Corinth
- People who do not believe in Christ
- God
- Christ
- The Jews, or Israelite people
- And the Greeks, or Gentiles

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "For the message about the cross does not make any sense to people who are being destroyed. But the people who God is saving, like us, know that this message is the way that God works powerfully in people's hearts to save them. As God says in the Scriptures, 'Some people think they have wise plans, but I will cause their plans to fail.' So where does that leave the wise, or the scholars, or the skillful debaters of this world? God has made people's wisdom seem foolish. God's wisdom made it impossible for people to use their own wisdom to know God. Instead, God sent a message that the people of this world think is foolish in order to save people who believe that message."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We feel surprised. In our culture, the people who say the wisest-sounding things are the ones everybody listens to, but God is saying their wisdom is foolish and will fail!" or
- "We feel grateful that God decided to save us, but we are surprised that he did because we are not better or wiser than other people. God just decided to be kind to us by showing us that this message is true," or
- "We want God to help other people see that the message about Christ and the cross is true. We do not want other people in Corinth to perish!"

Ask the people playing those who do not believe, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We think Paul is the one who is foolish, not us. He is always saying things that sound like nonsense!" or
- "Paul is saying God will destroy us and our wisdom, but if that is true, why are we still here right now? None of this makes any sense to us!"

Paul says, "Jews want miracles for proof, and Greeks seek human wisdom, but we preach about how Christ died on a cross. Jews refuse to believe this message, because it offends them. People who are not Jewish think this message is nonsense. But God has called some people, both Jewish people and Gentiles, to be his own. When these people hear our message, they hear a message about Christ who reveals God's power and wisdom. For even if people think God is acting foolishly, God is wiser than people. And even if people think God looks weak, God is actually stronger than people."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the Jews, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We feel offended! Paul keeps saying that Jesus is the Christ, but the Christ is supposed to be powerful and protect us. Jesus could not even protect *himself* from being killed," or
- "We feel surprised. Paul was a Jewish religious leader himself, and he knows the Old Testament very well, so why does he believe Jesus is the Christ?"

Ask the people playing the Greeks, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "All Paul talks about is the Jewish God, and Jesus, who was a Jew too. Does Paul realize that we are Greeks, not Jews? What does any of this have to do with us?" or
- "We think Paul is crazy. He is always saying this man named Jesus is God, but what kind of god allows himself to be killed? And what kind of a man could come back to life? None of this makes any sense!" or
- "We feel bored when we hear Paul teaching. All he ever talks about is Christ and the cross, Christ and the cross, Christ and the cross, like nothing else even matters to him. We wish he would think of something new and exciting to talk about like our Greek philosophers."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:18–25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul begins by saying that the message of the **cross** is foolishness to people who are perishing. A cross was a tool that the Roman people used to kill criminals. A cross was made with an upright piece of wood with another piece of wood, called "a crossbeam," attached to it sideways near the top. When the Romans **crucified** someone,

they would nail that person to a cross and then leave them to die. Use the same words or phrases for cross and crucified that you used in previous passages. For more information, look up cross and crucifixion in the Master Glossary.

Foolishness means nonsense, or something that does not make sense, and **perish** means to be completely destroyed or killed.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **foolishness** and **perishing**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the message of the cross is powerful for those of us who are being **saved**. God saves us when we believe that the message about Jesus dying on the cross is true and we choose to follow Jesus as our Savior.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "those of us whom God is saving." For more information about being saved, look up salvation in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Paul speaks words from the Old Testament where God says that he will destroy the **wisdom** of the wise. When someone is wise, he has wisdom. In the Bible, a person who has wisdom understands many things, and is able to make good decisions that lead to good results. However, it is God who gives wisdom to people. If a person pretends to be wise but does not accept God, then his wisdom is useless, and eventually his plans will fail. Therefore, God also says he will **thwart** the **cleverness** of the clever. When someone thwarts something, they reject it or do not trust it. In this case, God rejects people's cleverness, which is their own understanding or wisdom that they have not received from God.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **wisdom**, **thwart**, and **cleverness**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Wisdom is in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Paul asks, "Where is the **wise** person? Where is the **scribe**? Where is the **debater of this age**?" In the original language, this word for wise means intelligent, clever, or wise in a general way. A scribe is someone who has a high level of education or who is a teacher. The word translated debater means a person who is good at talking about strong differences of opinion. "This age" refers to the world's rules and way of living that are different from God's ways and that God will one day destroy. A "debater of this age" is someone who debates about how to live, but they do not talk about how to follow God.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **wise person**, **scribe**, **debater**, and **of this age**. Look up scribe in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

God saves those who **believe** the message about Christ. When someone believes the message about Christ, they trust that what God says is true, and they commit themselves to do what God says to do.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **believe**. Look up belief in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that **Jews** ask for **signs** and **Greeks** or **Gentiles** seek wisdom. Jews is another word for Israelites, God's special people who are the descendants of Jacob. Signs is another word for miracles. A person who does a miracle makes an unusual and impossible thing happen. Greeks are the people who belong to the country called Greece. In this case, Greeks also refer to anyone who is not a Jew. Paul uses both the terms for Greeks and for Gentiles to refer to the same group of people. Because the church in Corinth is in Greece, he often just calls non-Jews "Greeks."

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **Jews**, **signs**, and **Greeks** or **Gentiles**. Look up Jews, signs, Greeks, and Gentiles in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that he and others like him **preach** about Christ and the cross. To preach means to proclaim, or speak about, the good news about Christ publicly, or in a way that everyone can know about it.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **preach**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the message about Christ and the cross is a **stumbling block** to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. "Stumbling block" is special language that literally means a stone that people trip over. However, Paul uses it here to mean something that offends people but that also causes them to turn away from God in a way that destroys them.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **stumbling block**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene, but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 1:26–31

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 1:26–31 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:26–31 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:26–31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul is writing a letter to the church in Corinth where the believers have been arguing about which people are the wisest. In the last passage, Paul explained how God's wisdom is very different from human wisdom. God's wisdom is God's plan to send Christ to die on the cross to save people who believe. Paul said that, to people who do not believe, this sounds like foolishness rather than wisdom. But the truth is that this "foolishness" is wiser than any human wisdom, and what seems like God's weakness is actually stronger than human strength.

In this passage, Paul now reminds the church that when Paul first came to tell them about Christ, not many of them were wise in the way the world calls wise. The believers were not clever or well-educated people, but simple people who others did not consider wise or worth listening to. Few of them were powerful or wealthy. In the culture of Corinth, people became powerful when they were born into a family of people who were already rich or powerful. People became important because they were naturally clever. People became important because they made a lot of money. People became important because they studied to become people who spoke well.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do people become important or powerful? What are some ways people earn power or importance by what they do or say? Pause this audio here.

The believers have been arguing about who is wisest. Paul reminds them that God did not call them because they were wise or important. God specifically chose unimportant people like them for a reason. Paul says God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. God chose the weak, or powerless, to shame those who are strong, or powerful. And God chose the things the world despises and considers worthless in order to destroy what the world thinks is important.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about the kinds of people in your culture who people despise or think of as worthless. What do these people do or say that make other people despise them? What makes other people despise these people, that these people cannot change about themselves? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that because God called unimportant people, no one can boast to God about how important they are or the things they have achieved. In other words, God has given people everything, so the believers must not be proud or think God chose them because they are better than other people. It is God who called the believers to belong to Christ, or to become Christians. And it is Christ who has become the source of God's true wisdom to the believers. Christ is God's wisdom of righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

When Paul talks about righteousness, holiness, and redemption in this passage, Paul is not talking about actions that Christ helps the believers do for themselves. These are things Christ has done for the believers.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who other people treated as important either because of who that person's family was or because of who they were friends with, not because of anything that person did themselves. Pause this audio here.

Christ makes the believers righteous, or right with God, because Christ died on the cross. This righteousness is not something believers can earn or deserve. Christ does this work for the believers.

Christ makes the believers holy, or sanctified. You may remember in the Old Testament that the priests in the tabernacle kept special items the priests used to serve God only. The priests did not use these special items for anything else. Paul is telling the Corinthians that Christ sets the believers apart for God's special purposes. The believers are no longer "common" or "ordinary." Christ uses the believers to bring glory to God.

Christ redeems the believers when he sets them free from slavery. You may remember in the Old Testament that God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and brought them to the Promised Land. Paul is telling the Corinthians that Christ frees the believers from slavery to sin and death and gives the believers eternal life in God's kingdom.

At the end of the passage, Paul tells the believers that they may choose to boast only like the Scriptures say to boast. Paul says to boast only about what the Lord has done for the believers in Christ.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Parts (1 Corinthians 1:26–31)

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:26–31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul reminds the church that when God called them to believe in Christ, not many of them were wise, or influential, or born into important families. God specifically chose things the world does not think are wise, or powerful, or important in order to destroy what the world calls important.

In the second part: Paul says no one can boast to God about what they have achieved, because everything comes from God. God put the believers right with himself through Christ, and has made them like his people and set them free. So if the believers want to boast, they should only boast about what the Lord has done for them.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The people in the church at Corinth
- The people of the world
- God
- And Christ

At the beginning of the passage, Paul once again calls the Corinthian believers, "brothers and sisters." You will remember that Paul does not mean that these are his actual brothers and sisters from the same earthly father and mother. Instead, Paul says this to remind the believers of their close relationship with each other. The church of Corinth and Paul share the same God, who is their Father.

Paul asks the believers to consider their calling. Paul wants the believers to remember their lives at the time God first sent Paul to Corinth. Paul wants them to remember when Paul told them the message about Jesus Christ and "called," or invited, them to believe in Christ. Paul says that at that time, most of these Corinthians were not the kind of people others would call wise, or well-educated, or clever. Most of them did not have influence or power in their community, and they were not part of important families. In other words, these people had nothing to boast about.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who invited someone else to be part of a community, or invited them to do something important. How did you talk about the person who "calls" or invites someone else to do something? In your translation, how will you talk about how God called the Corinthians to believe in Christ? Pause this audio here.

Paul says God did not make a mistake when he chose unimportant people. God chose people like this for a very specific reason. Paul says God chose what the world calls foolish to shame the wise. God chose what is weak to shame the strong. And God chose what people despise, or call worthless, to show the world that what it calls important is actually worthless. In other words, the world would have picked the smartest, or most influential, or best-looking people. God picked the people the world rejects. Instead of following the world's rules for choosing people, God made a new set of rules to replace the world's rules. God wanted to humble the proud people of the world by making the things they boast about or trust in worthless.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Paul says that God chose the weak or foolish "things" of the world to shame the wise and powerful. "Things" can include people as well as thoughts, plans, and objects. In other words, God not only chose people who the world calls foolish, but he also chose thoughts and plans the world calls foolish. How will you make this clear in your translation? Pause this audio here.

In the second part of the passage, Paul says that no one can boast in the presence of God because God chose unimportant people. In other words, since God is not impressed by how smart or influential people are, or even what family they come from, then to God no one is better than another person. So a person cannot tell God that God should choose them because of who they are or what they have done. That is not why God chooses people.

To make his point even stronger, Paul says it is because of God that the believers are in Christ. In other words, God gave them Christ as a gift, not because they did something to earn Christ. And Christ became wisdom to the believers. You will remember that the believers have been boasting about who is the wisest person. The Corinthians behaved as if wisdom is something people get for themselves. The Corinthians use the word "wisdom" to talk about education or smart-sounding or spiritual talk. Paul says that true wisdom is the righteousness, holiness, and redemption that only Christ can give people.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Paul says that true "wisdom" is the righteousness, holiness, and redemption that Christ gives believers. This is a very different way of describing wisdom than people usually think about. How will you translate this passage to make it clear that Paul is saying God's wisdom means these three things that Christ gives believers? Pause this audio here.

People do not do anything to get righteousness, holiness, or redemption for themselves. Only Christ is able to do these things for the people who believe in, or put their trust in, Christ. The word "righteousness," or

justification, means that Christ makes believers right, or in a right relationship, with God. The word "sanctification," or holiness, means that Christ sets believers apart, or makes them special and dedicated to God. And the word "redemption" means freed, or liberated, since Christ sets believers free from the power of sin, evil, and death.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you talk about the ideas of righteousness, sanctification, and redemption in your translation so that people will clearly understand the things Christ does for those who believe and trust in him? Pause this audio here.

At the end of the passage, Paul says, "Therefore, as the Scriptures say, 'If you want to boast, boast about what the Lord has done for you.'" Here, Paul quotes, or speaks words from, the book of Jeremiah in the Old Testament. Paul uses these words to show that because of the true things Paul says, the believers must stop bragging about how wise and powerful people are. They must only brag about the good things God has done for them.

Now the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. You may want to use objects or people to show Paul, the believers in the church in Corinth, the people of the world, God, and Christ. As Paul describes how most of the believers were not wise, influential, or born into important families, you could first have the people in the group that represents the world act out how they are these things. Then you can have the people who represent the believers act out how they are not these things. Then you could have God pick the believers even though they were not wise, or influential, or important.

Next you could have Christ take the believers from the side of the room where the world is and take the believers over to the side of the room where God is standing to show how Christ puts the believers in a right relationship with God and also sets them apart from the world. You could also act out how they were slaves to sin when they were there on the side of the room where the world is, but how Christ frees them from sin and destruction when he takes them to the side where God is.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:26–31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The people in the church at Corinth
- The people of the world
- God
- And Christ

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "Brothers and sisters, when God called you to follow Christ, the people of the world did not think many of you were wise. Only a few of you were leaders in the community or came from important families. God chose what the world despised to put an end to the things the world considers important."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I feel upset that the believers are acting so proud and boasting to each other," or
- "I need to remind the believers that they have nothing to boast about. Most of them were not smart, important, or rich when I went to Corinth, so I do not know why they are boasting now," or
- "God is not impressed by how smart, important, or rich people are. In fact, God chose unimportant people like these believers to show the world that no one can boast to God."

Ask the people playing the believers in the church, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We want to be Christians, but we also want to be important and rich and have other people like us and say good things about us," or
- "We knew we were not very wise or important when Paul first taught us about Christ, but we thought Christ was going to help us become wise and powerful and rich," or
- "We thought maybe God made a mistake when he picked people like us to become Christians, because we were not important people."

Ask the people playing the people of the world, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "Those church people are fools! They keep trying to act and talk like we do, but they are different and everyone can tell," or
- "The God of those Christ-followers must not be very powerful if these are the best people he could find to follow him," or
- "We are offended! If this was really the one true God, surely he would invite our wisest and most powerful people to follow him first. Only a weak god would choose weak people."

Paul says, "God did all of this so that no one could proudly say that God should choose them because they are better than other people. God sent Christ who became God's wisdom for us. That is, Christ made us right with God by setting us apart as God's special people. And he freed us from slavery to sin and death. And so, if anyone wants to brag, they should brag about what the Lord has done for us!"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "God created everything, so he is not impressed by what people can do," or
- "When the believers boast about themselves and other people, it is like they want to be worshiped instead of worshiping God. They must stop doing that!" or
- "God gave us Christ, who is the only true wisdom, because Christ makes us right with God and saves us from destruction. And that is all that matters, because in the end, Christ will destroy everything else!"

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want everyone to worship me instead of worshiping the people and things I created," or
- "I chose weak people because I wanted everyone to understand that they cannot become right with me on their own. They can only come to me through Jesus Christ, my Son."

Ask the person playing Christ, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "When people believe and trust in me to make them right with God, they must understand that this is something I do for them. Nothing they can do or become on their own will make them right with God my Father," or
- "Although I am God myself, even I did not boast. Instead, I did what my Father told me to do. I came to earth as an unimportant person to suffer and die in a humiliating way on a cross like a criminal. And I did all of this to bring honor to my Father and to save people who could not save themselves."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 1:26–31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul begins this passage by again calling the believers in the church in Corinth **brothers**. You will remember that Paul does not mean these people are literally his brothers from the same human father. Instead, Paul uses this word to mean that all the believers, both men and women, have the same God, who is their Father. Look up believers in the Master Glossary for more information about who these people were. Use the same word or phrase for brothers as you used in previous passages.

Paul tells the believers to consider their **calling**. What Paul means is that he wants the people to think about what they were like when God first sent Paul to tell them about Christ and to invite them to become believers. Remember how you talked about Christ calling Paul in previous passages, and use similar words or phrases here.

Paul says that when he first told these people in Corinth about Christ, few of them were "wise according to worldly standards." You will remember from the previous passage that people in Corinth used the word wise to mean people who were well-educated, clever, and able to speak well before crowds of people. So here Paul is saying that most of the believers are none of these things. This is different from what God calls wisdom, which Paul will explain next.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will say that most of the believers were not **wise according to worldly standards**. If you have already translated this word or phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that most of the believers were not **influential**. The word influential means that a person has power and authority over other people because of their position or rank in the community.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will say that most of the believers were not **influential**. If you have already translated this word or phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that most of the believers were also not "of noble birth." This is another way of saying that their families were not rich or important and powerful in the community.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **noble birth**. If you have already translated this word or phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Instead, Paul says God chose the **foolish** things of the world to shame the wise and the weak things of the world to shame the strong. The word foolish means nonsense, or thoughts that do not make sense. You will remember

from the previous passage that to people who do not believe in Christ, God's plan seems foolish. Use the same word or phrase for foolish as you used in previous passages.

The word shame means to humiliate, disgrace, or embarrass.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **shame**. If you have already translated this word or phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

In this passage, Paul uses the word **weak** to mean people or things that are the opposite of influential or powerful, and he uses the word **strong** to mean influential or powerful. Use the same word for strong as you used in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will talk about **weak** people and **strong** people. If you have already translated these ideas in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says God specifically chose things that are **lowly** and **despised** by the world to nullify, or make powerless, the things that the world calls important. Lowly and despised things are things that people think are unimportant or worthless, and they treat those things with hate.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will talk about the **lowly** and **despised** things making important things powerless. Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the believers that God gave them **Christ** Jesus, and it is Christ who became God's **wisdom** to the believers. Here the word wisdom means the true wisdom of God that is righteousness, holiness, and redemption. When someone is **righteous**, God makes them right with himself. When God makes someone holy or **sanctifies** them, God sets them apart as special for himself. When someone **redeems** someone, they set them free from something that they are slaves to. Use the same word for Christ as you have used in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary if you need more information about Christ.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **wisdom**, **righteousness**, **holiness** or **sanctification**, and **redemption**. Look up wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redeem in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these ideas in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that as the Scriptures say, if anyone wants to boast, they should **boast** in the **Lord**. To boast can mean to put a high degree of confidence in someone or something. So Paul is saying they should not talk too much about the wonderful things they have done, or they should not trust too much in themselves or other people, but they should only trust the Lord. Lord is a title for Jesus that means that Jesus is our master who has all authority over us. Look up Lord in the Master Glossary for more information. Use the same word for Lord as you used in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **boast**. If you have already translated this word or phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 1:26–31

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (17708727 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 6](#)

1 Corinthians 2:1–5

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.

3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul has been writing a letter to the church in the city of Corinth. Paul has heard that people in the church at Corinth are dividing, or separating, into different groups because they disagree with each other about which teacher, or leader, to follow. Paul has been reminding the people in the church that they all follow Christ, and that Christ is not divided. Paul has been saying that the message about Jesus Christ who died on the cross does not come from the wisdom of people, but from God.

In this part of his letter, Paul reminds the church how Paul acted as a leader when he first came to Corinth and taught them about Christ. By reminding the Corinthians how Paul acted, Paul is going to show the Corinthians that it is foolish to be fascinated by the wisdom and cleverness of human leaders. Paul says that when he came to Corinth to tell them about God's secret truth, Paul did not use clever words to sound more wise than other people. Instead, Paul decided to only speak about Jesus Christ, and especially Christ's death on the cross.

In Greek and Roman culture at this time, people who wanted to be leaders would learn to speak using words that sounded very smart and important. Other people liked to gather together in crowds to hear these leaders speak, and many people would follow these leaders and do what they said.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do people in your culture talk when they want other people to agree with their ideas and do what they say? How do they act or communicate with their body movements? What kinds of words do they use, and how do they say them? Pause this audio here.

Paul reminds the church how he acted and spoke very differently from these other leaders when he was in Corinth. Paul said he acted weak and fearful, and that he trembled or shook. Paul says that the gospel message, or the things Paul said to the people in Corinth about Jesus Christ and the cross, sounded very plain instead of clever or wise. Paul says he did not use important-sounding words to convince people. Instead, when Paul spoke about Christ, it was the power of God's Spirit that showed the Corinthians that the message was true.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do people expect a leader to act and talk? If the leader acts weak, fearful, or nervous, how do people respond? Pause this audio here.

Finally, Paul says that he did not use wise or clever words because he wanted God's power to cause people to have faith, or to believe the message about Jesus. He did not want people to believe the message about Jesus because of human wisdom. We do not know what it was that made Paul sound weak and fearful. Maybe Paul had a physical illness or problem with his body, or maybe he was afraid he would not teach well.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you know from a person's actions or way of speaking that they are weak or fearful? Take turns speaking to the group in a way that is weak or fearful. Pay attention to the way each person acts with their body as well as how they speak. Pause this audio here.

Paul says this weakness proves it was not Paul's own wisdom or cleverness that convinced the Corinthians of the truth about Christ and the cross. Instead, it was the power of God's Spirit that showed the Corinthians the truth. Therefore, the Corinthians must not follow the wisdom of human teachers, but they must only follow Christ.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul says that when he was in Corinth, Paul did not use important-sounding words to tell the Corinthians about the mystery of God. Instead, Paul decided to only talk about Christ and Christ's death on the cross.

In the second part: Paul says he acted weak and fearful, and he trembled when he spoke. So Paul says the Corinthians believed the truth about Christ and the cross not because Paul spoke well, but because God's Spirit showed the Corinthians the truth.

In the third part: Paul tells the Corinthians he spoke this way so the Corinthians would not put their faith in human wisdom but in God's power.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The people in the church at Corinth
- The different leaders that the people in the church are following
- God's Spirit
- God
- Jesus Christ

Paul begins this part of his letter by saying, "It was the same way for me." In the original language, this is a way to strongly connect what Paul is about to say to what he just finished saying in the previous part of his letter. Paul has just been saying that people should speak with God's power and wisdom, instead of with important-sounding words. The people in Corinth liked the important-sounding teachers, but now Paul is going to compare what they liked to how he taught the Corinthians when he was in Corinth.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: When you are telling people something important, what words or phrases do you use to let people know that a new thing you are going to say connects in an important way to the last thing you said? Pause this audio here.

Paul talks about what he did when he came to them. You will remember that Paul is writing this to the church in Corinth from a long distance away. So he is talking about a time in the past when he came to Corinth. Paul says that when he came to Corinth to tell them about God's secret truth, or mystery, Paul did not use complicated and important-sounding words like a person with a lot of learning or education might use. In the original language, the word that some translate as "mystery" refers to a message or truth that God did not tell people in the past, but that God has now revealed to his people.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about something that people did not know or understand in the past, but that they know now. Pay attention to the words or phrases you use to describe how people were confused or unsure of that thing before, and then how they felt when they finally understood. Pause this audio here.

Paul explains why he acted and spoke this way when he was in Corinth. Paul says that he "decided to know nothing" when he was in Corinth except Jesus Christ who was crucified. Paul does not literally mean that he forgot all the other things he knew. Paul is using special language to show he did not want to do or say anything

to make people in Corinth think he was wise or important himself. Instead, Paul only wanted to talk about Christ so that people would follow Christ and not Paul.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What special words or phrases do you use in your language when you want to explain why a certain thing is the most important thing to know or talk about? Pause this audio here.

In the second part, Paul reminds the Corinthians that he acted differently than other leaders in Corinth. Paul says he felt three things: weakness, fear, and trembling. Maybe Paul means he was weak when he first arrived in Corinth, or maybe it was sometime during his long stay. We are not sure if Paul means that he was physically weak from an illness, or whether he means he was afraid he would not teach well. Because we are not sure which kind of weakness Paul means, try to use a word or phrase for weakness in your language that could mean any kind of weakness.

Stop here as a group and discuss how you will translate to show that Paul showed weakness, fear, and trembling. If needed, refer back to step two where you acted out a leader who spoke weakly or with fear. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that in his "message and preaching," Paul did not use clever words to make himself look like a wise or convincing teacher. In the original language, the words some people translate as "message and preaching" are different from the word Paul used in the previous passage to describe the way other teachers in Corinth speak. By not using the words the Corinthians expect and think are so important, Paul again shows them that it is foolish to follow someone just because they can speak in a clever way.

Paul says it was the "Spirit" and "power" of God that showed the Corinthians the truth. Paul is not saying that Spirit and power are two different things, but one thing together. Here Paul is talking about the power of God's Spirit, which not only shows people the truth, but also changes people's actions and makes wrong things right here on earth.

Stop here as a group and discuss how you will make it clear in your translation that God's Spirit is powerful and working. Pause this audio here.

In the third part, Paul says that he spoke the way he did so the Corinthians would not trust in human wisdom, but in God's power. Paul means that a teacher cannot prove that the message about Christ and his death on the cross are true. We know that message is true when God changes people's lives and actions when they follow Christ.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The people in the church at Corinth
- The different leaders that the people in the church are following
- God's Spirit
- God
- Jesus Christ

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first part of this passage, Paul continues to warn the Corinthians not to follow teachers who rely on their own human wisdom and skillful speech. Paul does this by reminding the Corinthians that when he taught them, Paul did not talk like a person who wants to show how smart they are. Instead, Paul only talked about Jesus Christ and how Christ died on the cross.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I tried so hard to make sure the Corinthians understood that Christ was their leader, not me or some other person. Did they forget?" or
- "I feel frustrated because the believers seem more interested in following humans than Christ himself!"

Ask the people playing the teachers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We like when people pay attention to us and say we are wise," or
- "Christ is important, but we want to be important too."

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We really like people who talk well and have good ideas. They make us feel smart too," or
- "How can we trust that what people are saying is true unless they are smart and can talk well?"

In the second part of the passage, Paul reminds the Corinthians that when he was in Corinth teaching them, he was weak and fearful, and he trembled. So the Corinthians believed the truth about Christ and the cross not because Paul spoke well, but because God's Spirit changed their lives.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am not proud of how I spoke when I taught the Corinthians. I sounded weak and fearful. But that is okay, because it made the Corinthians follow Christ instead of me," or
- "I am amazed that God worked through me even though I was weak and fearful."

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "I forgot how weak and fearful Paul behaved. It is surprising we listened to him at all!" or
- "Paul is right. We used to follow Christ together, but I guess we got distracted by all of these really smart people and started following them instead."

In the last part of the passage, Paul tells the Corinthians he spoke this way so they would not put their faith in human wisdom, but in God's power.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "Maybe the believers did not know what they were doing wrong, but now they know," or
- "I hope they will listen to me and only follow Christ now instead of these teachers."

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "I am not sure how we got so distracted from the truth that Paul taught us about Christ," or
- "I feel foolish for being so impressed by other people's wisdom, but I am glad Paul reminded us to only follow Christ."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul begins this passage by calling the people in the church in Corinth **brothers**. Paul does not mean these people are literally his brothers from the same human father. Paul is using this special language to mean people, both men and women, who believe in and follow Christ. Use the same words for brothers, or brothers and sisters, that you have used in previous passages.

Paul says that when he was with the believers in Corinth, he did not come using **high-sounding speech** to **proclaim** the **mystery** of God. When someone uses "high-sounding speech," they are talking in a proud way that makes them sound more wise or intelligent than other people. When people proclaim something, they are telling other people an important message. This important message is the mystery or truth that God has revealed. Use the same word or phrase for mystery that you used in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **high-sounding speech** and **proclaim**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul uses the word **wisdom** several times in this passage. In each case, Paul does not mean God's divine wisdom, but human knowledge or cleverness. Use the same word or phrase for wisdom that you have used in previous passages. For more information on wisdom, refer to the Master Glossary.

When Paul was in Corinth, he only taught about Jesus **Christ** who was **crucified**. Crucifixion was the Roman way of executing people. Crucifixion means that someone is nailed to a cross and then left to die. People killed Jesus by crucifying him on a cross. Use the same words or phrases for Christ and crucified that you used in previous passages. For more information on Christ and crucifixion, refer to the Master Glossary.

Paul not only acted weak and fearful in Corinth, but he also **trembled**. When a person trembles, their body shakes, usually because they feel fear or anxiety. However, if Paul had a physical illness, that may also have caused him to tremble.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **trembling**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says he taught not with wise-sounding and **persuasive** words, but with a **demonstration** of the power of **God's Spirit**. When someone persuades someone else, they say words that get people to agree with them or do something they want them to do. Demonstration is the evidence or proof that shows people something is true. In this case, people know that Paul's teaching is true because they see God's Spirit working. The Spirit of God is the power that comes from God. This power creates, gives life, performs miracles, and changes people.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **God's Spirit**. God's Spirit refers to the Holy Spirit, but here he is just called "the Spirit." See Holy Spirit in the Master Glossary for full information about God's Spirit. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 2:1–5

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (12934205 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 3](#)
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[mp3 zip](#) (9691399 KB)

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1 Corinthians 2:6–16

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 2:6–16 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 2:6–16 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 2:6–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul is writing a letter to the church in Corinth where people have been arguing about which teacher to follow. Paul just finished telling the believers not to be impressed by the wisdom of humans, but to only follow Christ. Paul reminded the Corinthians that Paul himself did not speak well when he taught in Corinth. Paul said he

spoke this way so the Corinthians would believe in Christ because of the power of God's Spirit, not because Paul sounded wise.

Paul begins to explain the difference between human wisdom and the wisdom of God. Paul says that those who teach about Christ actually do teach wisdom to those who are mature, or grown up, in their faith. But Paul says the wisdom these people teach is very different from the wisdom of human leaders, like kings and governors. Paul reminds the Corinthians that while these human leaders seem wise and powerful now, they will pass away, or die, and people will forget these leaders.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who is very wise. How do you know this person is wise? How do they act or talk differently from other people? Pause this audio here.

Paul says those who teach about Christ teach a different kind of wisdom. This wisdom was a secret in the past. God has now revealed this wisdom through God's Spirit to people who believe. This "secret" was God's plan to send Christ to die on the cross to save God's people. Paul says God destined, or decided, this plan even before God created the world. God did this to honor every person who believes in Christ so that believers can live close to God and experience his wonder and power. Paul says that the rulers of this age, or the human leaders of this world, did not understand the wisdom of God's secret plan. Because these leaders did not understand the plan, they crucified Jesus Christ on the cross.

Now, Paul quotes someone, or says someone else's words. We are not sure who Paul is quoting. Paul may be quoting the writings of Jewish teachers who used words from the Old Testament to teach people. Or Paul may be putting words together from the Old Testament himself. Either way, Paul says these words in a way to show they are very important and that someone with wisdom, or authority, from God first spoke these words. Paul says that the things that God planned for the people who love God are better than any person has ever seen, heard, or imagined. These wonderful things are what God has revealed, or shown, to us through God's Spirit. Only God's people can understand God's wisdom. People who follow Christ are the only people who have God's Spirit.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when a group of people saw something happen but did not understand it. What happens when only one person in the group understands what happened or why it happened? How is that person different from the others who do not understand? Pause this audio here.

Paul asks a question that he does not expect the Corinthian believers to answer. Paul says, "Who knows the thoughts that another person has?" Only a person's spirit, or that person himself, knows that person's thoughts. In the same way, no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. People who follow Christ can understand the things that God has freely given to us because we have this Spirit that is from God. And because of this, we can understand God's wise plan.

Paul says people like him, who teach about Christ, do not use words that wise-sounding people taught them. Instead, these teachers use words that God's Spirit teaches them. And these teachers explain these truths to people who have God's Spirit.

People who do not have God's Spirit do not accept, or believe, things that God's Spirit says. These people think what God's Spirit says is foolish, or nonsense. But people who have God's Spirit are able to judge, or evaluate, if something is wise or foolish. Paul says people who do not have God's Spirit cannot judge if the person who has God's Spirit is wise or foolish. Paul says this because the Corinthians judge teachers by how wise the Corinthians think the teacher sounds. Paul knows the Corinthians believe the Corinthians are very spiritual and wise. Paul is reminding the Corinthians that their human wisdom cannot judge the wisdom that comes from God's Spirit.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who wanted to become wise. What did that person do to help them learn or get more wisdom? How did other people help them become more wise? Pause this audio here.

Paul asks another question he does not expect the Corinthians to answer. Paul says, "Who knows the Lord's thoughts? Who knows enough to teach the Lord?" Paul then says we have the mind, or the very thoughts, of Christ. When Paul says "the mind of Christ," he is using words from the book that the prophet Isaiah wrote. In the Old Testament, Isaiah uses the words "the mind of the Lord" or "the mind of Yahweh." Paul says this because

he knows that Jesus Christ is the same God that we hear about in the Old Testament, who was named Yahweh. Paul means that God's Spirit, who guides the thoughts of Christ, also guides the thoughts of people who believe in and follow Christ.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 2:6–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four parts.

In the first part: Paul says he and others like him do teach wisdom, but not the kind human rulers teach.

In the second part: Paul says the things God planned for people who love God are better than any person has ever seen, heard, or imagined.

In the third part: Paul says the only one who knows what is in a person's heart is that person. In the same way, no one knows the things of God except God's Spirit.

In the fourth part: People without God's Spirit think what God's Spirit says is foolish, but people who have God's Spirit can judge the value of everything. The person with God's Spirit shares wisdom that comes from Christ, who is God himself.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers
- People who teach with words from God's Holy Spirit
- People who teach others using their own human wisdom
- God, whose personal name is Yahweh
- Jesus Christ
- Holy Spirit

Think about this part of the letter all together. Although Paul says many things in this passage, he shares four big ideas. First, God's wisdom is different from human wisdom. Second, God's wisdom, or plan, is much better than human wisdom. Third, people cannot understand God's plan unless God's Spirit shows them. And fourth, people without God's Spirit cannot judge those who speak from God's Spirit.

In the previous part of his letter, Paul told the Corinthians not to be impressed by human wisdom and to only follow Christ. In this part, Paul starts this new thought with a word that clearly contrasts the previous part with the way he starts this new thought. Paul is going to show that there are two types of wisdom—human wisdom and God's true wisdom, or plan. Paul says that people follow God's wisdom when they follow Christ.

Paul says that he and others like him do teach wisdom to people who are spiritually mature, or who trust firmly in Christ. This wisdom is very different from the wisdom human leaders teach. Paul reminds the Corinthians that these human leaders only live a short time and will soon pass away, or die. By comparison, God's wisdom is a plan God made long ago, before God even created the world. Here, Paul says God "destined" this to happen. To destine is to determine something before it happens. This plan that God destined, which was once a mystery or secret to people, is the gospel message about Jesus Christ and Christ's crucifixion. Here, Paul is using the word mystery to mean a secret truth that God's Spirit is now showing people. Paul says that none of the rulers of this age, or the human leaders in the world, understood this truth. If they had, Paul says, they would not have put Christ to death on the cross.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about something that used to be a secret between two people, but then one person told someone else, and then that person told others until many people knew it. How do you talk about that secret now that many people know about it? Pause this audio here.

In the second part, Paul shares some words that are probably from other parts of the Bible. Paul says that no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart, or mind, has imagined the very good things that God has made ready for those who love God. Here, Paul talks about the eye, the ear, and the heart, or mind. Each of these parts of the body describe parts of a person's thoughts and emotions. People use their eyes and ears to learn new things. People use their mind to understand what they learn and to create ideas. In Paul's time, people thought that the heart was the center of their inner life, or the place where people's thoughts and feelings came from. So this phrase means that nobody had ever thought about God's wise plan before God revealed it to people. This is why some translations use the word mind instead of heart. You should translate this phrase in a way that is natural in your own language.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how do you describe the inner parts of a person where they understand and form ideas? What part of a person's body describes where they feel their deepest emotions? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that these things that people could not imagine in the past God has now revealed to us, or to everyone who believes. God revealed the gospel to Paul and the apostles first, but then Paul and the apostles shared this gospel with the Corinthians. God's Holy Spirit showed every one of them the good things that God was preparing for them. And now God's Holy Spirit is also showing these things to all people who believe in Christ.

Paul says that the Holy Spirit searches everything. This is special language that means the Holy Spirit knows everything about everything. This does not mean that the Spirit goes around looking for information. The Spirit is not "searching" as if there were things he was trying to find out. Paul says that the Spirit searches even the "deep things of God." This is also special language. This means the Spirit knows the hardest things to know about God. The Spirit also knows everything about God's nature, actions, and thoughts. And the Holy Spirit knows all about God's secret wisdom, including all the things God has prepared for those who love God.

In the third part, Paul asks a question he does not expect the Corinthians to answer. Paul says, "Who knows the thoughts that another person has?" Paul is reminding the Corinthians that only a person's spirit that lives within that person knows that person's thoughts. In the same way, says Paul, God's own Spirit is the only one who knows what is in God's mind.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do you talk about a person's inner thoughts and feelings no one else knows? If that person only shares those thoughts or feelings with someone that is very close to them, how do you describe the close relationship those two people share? Pause this audio here.

Paul uses a word in the original language that connects his next thought strongly with what he just said. Paul says that God did not give us the spirit of the world, but God gave us God's Spirit. Paul uses the phrase "spirit of the world" here to mean the way this world's people think about things. The word Paul uses does not refer to an evil spirit or demon. Paul is simply saying that people who are not believers in Christ depend on their own ability to think about things. These people have no way to know God's way of thinking about things.

The things that the Spirit showed Paul and others who teach the gospel is what they now teach others. These teachers do not use words that wise people taught them, but instead, they use words the Spirit taught them. Paul is saying that God's Spirit helped Paul and these other teachers know what words to say.

In the fourth part, Paul says that the man, or person, without the Spirit does not accept things from God's Spirit. Paul says people like this think what the Spirit says is foolish, or nonsense. These people may read the truths in the Bible, and see or hear the gospel message, but unless the Holy Spirit helps them, they cannot understand. Paul says people must discern these things spiritually. This means they must study, examine, or investigate something thoroughly to learn all about it. A person without God's Spirit cannot understand the value of God's plan or understand how wise it is, no matter how much they study. Only the Spirit can show them the truth.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What words do you use to talk about the way a person works to learn something new? If needed, look back at step two to see what words you used in your story about a person who wanted to become wise. Pause this audio here.

Paul says the spiritual person judges all things, but no one can judge the spiritual person. Paul means a person who does not have God's Spirit will not be able to correctly examine and evaluate a person who does have God's Spirit. So that person will not understand or appreciate what the person who has the Spirit says.

Paul now asks another question he does not expect the Corinthians to answer. Paul says, "Who knows the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" In the original language, the phrase "the mind of the Lord" means to understand what the Lord thinks about things. The Jewish people called God, whose personal name was Yahweh, by the respectful title "Lord." By asking this question, Paul is actually saying that no one would dare to say they were wise enough to understand the thoughts of the almighty and powerful Yahweh. "But," Paul says, "we have the mind of Christ." By saying this, Paul makes a very bold and final statement: Jesus Christ is the same God as the Yahweh that we hear about in the Old Testament. This message about Christ and the cross is the wise thoughts of God himself.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to have drawings or objects to represent the four categories Paul writes about. The categories are: human wisdom, God's wisdom, people who do not understand God's wisdom, and people who do understand because God's Spirit helps them. As you begin to retell the story of this part of Paul's letter, show how Paul's ideas move back and forth between each category. These movements may help the people in the group to visualize the flow of this part of Paul's letter.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 2:6–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers
- People who teach with words from God's Holy Spirit
- People who teach others using their own human wisdom
- God, whose personal name is Yahweh
- Jesus Christ
- Holy Spirit

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In this passage, Paul talks about four main ideas or categories: human wisdom, God's wisdom, people who do not understand God's wisdom, and people who do understand because God's Spirit helps them. As you talk through the passage, Paul often moves back and forth between these ideas and how they do, or do not, work together. To help the group visualize what Paul is saying better, you might want to divide the room into four corners. On one side of the room, put human wisdom in one corner and God's wisdom in the other corner. Then on the other side of the room, put the people who only understand human wisdom in one corner, and the believers who understand God's wisdom in the other corner. Now, as you talk about each thing that Paul is saying in the passage, you can move between the four ideas to show how Paul is explaining the relationship between each one.

As the passage begins, Paul says there are two very different kinds of wisdom, which are human wisdom and God's wisdom. God's wisdom is not like human wisdom at all. God's wisdom is the plan God made even before he created the world to send Jesus Christ to earth to die on the cross, but the people who rule the world, like kings, did not understand this. If they had understood, they would not have killed Christ on the cross.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I feel disappointed that the Corinthians seem more interested in human wisdom than God's wisdom," or
- "God's wise plan is so much better than any human wisdom. How could the Corinthians forget that?" or
- "I feel hopeful that the believers will remember what I taught them about God's good plan and only follow Christ from now on!"

Paul reminds the Corinthians that God's plan through Jesus Christ is far better than any ideas people create to try to fix the problems of this world. But people can only understand God's wisdom if God's Holy Spirit shows them that these words are true.

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We feel uncertain. Paul says to only follow Christ, but people have many spiritual ideas in our city. It is hard to only follow Christ!" or
- "We feel embarrassed that we started to forget God's good plan that Paul taught us. How did we get distracted by these other teachers?"

Paul says the only one who knows what is in a person's heart is that person. In the same way, no one knows the things of God except God's Spirit. So teachers like Paul do not use words they learned from human wisdom. Instead, these teachers use words God's Spirit teaches them to explain these truths to God's people.

Pause the drama.

Ask the people who teach using words from God's Spirit, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We feel joy because of God's good plan!" or
- "We feel humble. We know we are not great speakers ourselves," or
- "We just want to obey God by saying whatever the Spirit tells us to say."

Finally, Paul says unbelievers think what God's Spirit says is foolish, but people who have God's Spirit know what is true. Unbelievers cannot properly understand the wisdom God's Spirit gives a believer to say, because that person speaks with Christ's own thoughts.

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the people who lead others using their own human wisdom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We feel confused. Paul's ideas are very simple. Why does anyone even listen to him?" or
- "We feel proud of our wisdom. People should listen to us instead of Paul," or
- "We feel threatened. We like Jesus, but if people only follow him, we will not be important anymore!"

Ask the people playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We feel happy that Paul is reminding us that God's plan about Jesus is not like human wisdom," or
- "We feel peace that we do not have to figure out for ourselves which teacher is telling the truth. God's Spirit will show us what is true."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul says that he and others like him do teach **wisdom** to those who are mature in Christ. But Paul says this wisdom from God is very different from human wisdom. Use the same word or phrase for wisdom that you used in previous passages. For more information on wisdom, refer to the Master Glossary.

A person who is **mature** is fully developed or grown up. They are adults. They are not children anymore. They think and act like adults. In this case, Paul is saying that these people are spiritually mature, or able to understand and accept the message about Christ. This is the only place in the Bible that uses this special word in the original language.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **mature**. Pause this audio here.

Paul says the rulers of this age did not understand this wisdom from God. Paul also reminds the Corinthians that these rulers will soon pass away. Rulers are people who have important positions of leadership, like kings, princes, or chiefs. An age is a significant period of time, like an era, or a lifetime. To pass away means to die and be forgotten by other people.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **rulers**, **this age**, and **pass away**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

This wisdom that Paul and others like him share about Christ was once a **mystery**. Here, the word mystery means something was a secret but God is now telling or revealing it. This is not a secret people are finding for themselves, but God's Spirit is showing people this truth.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **mystery**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says God **destined** this plan before God created the world for the **glory** of all who believe in Christ. To destine means to design or determine something before you do it. Glory usually means the power and beauty of God or Jesus himself. When God does something for *our* glory, we can experience in our own lives how beautiful and powerful God is. In other words, God decided to do his plan long ago so that people can receive beautiful and powerful things from God.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **destined** and **glory**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Look up glory in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that if the rulers of this age had understood the wisdom of God's plan, they would not have **crucified** the Lord of glory. Crucifixion was the Roman way of executing people. Use the same word or phrase for crucified that you used in previous passages. For more information on crucifixion, refer to the Master Glossary.

A **lord** is someone who is a master over other people, who has full authority, and who deserves for people to give him respect. God is called the Lord because he has authority over the whole world. After Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead, people called Jesus Lord because Jesus has authority over these people just like God the Father has. Use the same word or phrase for Lord that you used in previous passages. For more information on Lord, refer to the Master Glossary.

Paul says it is God's **Holy Spirit** who reveals these things to people who believe in Christ. He says that only a person's **spirit** in them can understand the things they are thinking. A person's spirit is the part of a person we cannot see—it is our feelings and thoughts. When Paul talks about the spirit of the world, he is talking about the thoughts of the people in the world who do not have God's Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, however, is the Spirit of God. Sometimes the Bible calls this the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord, or sometimes just the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity—the God who is one, but consists of three persons. God the Father, God the Son who is Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit, are three different persons, but together they are one God. Use the same word or phrase for Spirit that you used in previous passages. For more information on the spirit of a person and on the Holy Spirit, refer to the Master Glossary.

When someone **reveals** something, they announce, or make something appear that no one could see or know before. Use the same words or phrases for reveal that you have used in previous passages. A revelation is the thing that someone reveals. See the Master Glossary for more information about revelation.

Paul says the **natural** person does not accept what God's Spirit says, because that person thinks God's wisdom is foolish nonsense. The word natural means the opposite of spiritual things that cannot be seen or touched. Natural things are those things that will pass away, or die.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **natural**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that people without God's Spirit cannot **discern** spiritual things from God, so they cannot **judge** the person who speaks with God's Spirit. To judge means to examine closely or to investigate. To discern means to make a judgment based on careful and detailed information.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **discern** and **judge**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that those who believe are able to understand God's wisdom because we have the mind of **Christ**. Christ is the special title that was given to Jesus to show that Jesus is the Messiah, or Savior, that God promised to send to the Israelites. Use the same word or phrase for Christ that you used in previous passages. For more information on Christ, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (20622290 KB)

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1 Corinthians 3:1-4

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:1–4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul is writing a letter to the church in Corinth where people have been arguing about which teacher is the wisest. Paul has just reminded these believers that human wisdom is not the same thing as God's wisdom. True wisdom is God's plan to bring people close to God through Christ's death on the cross. But people can only understand God's wisdom if the Holy Spirit shows them the truth.

In this part of his letter, Paul says that when he was in Corinth, Paul could not speak to the believers there like spiritual people. Spiritual people are people who the Holy Spirit guides. Instead, Paul says he talked like the believers belonged to the world. Paul talked like the believers were acting like infants, or babies, in their faith rather than like mature Christians.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a child who tried to act like a grown-up person. What did the child do or say? How were the child's words and actions different from an adult's even though they were trying to act like an adult? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that because the Corinthians were immature in their faith, Paul was only able to teach the believers the basic truths of the gospel. A mother gives her baby milk because it cannot digest solid food. Paul was only able to teach the Corinthians the basic truths about Christ and how he died on the cross. The Corinthians were not ready to hear the harder teaching about how when they follow Christ, they need to change their thoughts and actions.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who knew many wise sayings but acted foolishly. Now tell a story about a person who followed those wise sayings in their actions. Pause this audio here.

Even now, Paul says, the believers are not ready to digest, or absorb, the solid food of this message. An adult's stomach is able to break up solid food into the things the body needs to be healthy. A mature believer is able to absorb the gospel message so that the gospel brings change to every part of that person's thoughts and actions. Paul says that when the Corinthian believers hear the gospel message, they are not understanding it or allowing it to change their thoughts and actions like a mature believer. Paul says this is because the Corinthian believers are not following the Holy Spirit. Instead, the believers are following their natural human desires, just like the people in the world who are not believers. Paul says the believers are jealous of each other. Therefore, the believers argue with each other.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Act out a group of children playing a game where one child must give instructions to the other children. Act out how the children all want to be the one in charge, and how they argue about which child will be most important. Pause this audio here.

Now, Paul asks the Corinthians a question he does not expect the Corinthians to answer. Paul says, "Does this not prove that you belong to the world?" When Paul asks this question, Paul is telling the Corinthians that when they are jealous and argue, they act like people of this world. The believers are not acting like the wise and spiritual people they think they are.

Paul asks another question he does not expect the Corinthians to answer. Paul says, "Are you not acting like people of this world?" Again, Paul is using a question to say that the Corinthians are acting just like ordinary people. The Corinthians are not acting like believers in Christ should act.

Finally, Paul asks one more similar question he does not expect the Corinthians to answer. Paul says, "For when one of you says 'I follow Paul,' and another, 'I follow Apollos,' is this not how ordinary people act?" With this question, Paul says a third time that the Corinthians are acting like people of this world. Paul also reminds the Corinthians what Paul said in the last passage. You will remember that the believers in Corinth have been following teachers who speak with words that sound very wise. The words of the teachers make the believers feel more important and more spiritual than other people. With this question, Paul once again shows the Corinthians that they are not acting like wise and spiritual people at all. Instead, the Corinthians are acting like unbelievers.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:1–4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul says when he was in Corinth, Paul spoke as if the believers were baby Christians and not spiritually mature. Paul says he taught the Corinthians the gospel as if he were giving them milk and not solid food.

In the second part: Paul says that even now the Corinthians are still spiritual babies. This is because the believers follow their own human desires rather than the Holy Spirit. Paul says the way the believers are jealous of each other and argue shows that they are not spiritual, but like the people in the world.

In the third part: Paul again reminds the believers how they argue about which teacher to follow. Paul says this too shows the believers are acting like people in this world rather than people who follow God's Spirit.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers
- Christ
- And the Holy Spirit

First, think about this part of the letter all together. Paul uses special language and examples to show the believers that what they think is spiritual is actually what ordinary people think. What they think is mature, or wise, is actually immature. As you go through the passage, it may help the group to visualize the flow back and forth between the way the Corinthians see themselves and how Paul sees the Corinthians.

At the beginning of this part of the letter, Paul calls the believers "brothers." Paul does not mean these are his actual brothers from the same earthly father. This is a special way of talking that means that Paul and all the believers, both men and women, in the church at Corinth have the same God, who is their spiritual father. This is very important because it shows that Paul knows these are true believers in Christ, even though Paul is about to say that they are not acting like it.

Paul says when he was in Corinth, Paul could not talk to the believers as spiritual people, but as people "of the flesh," or people who follow what their own bodies tell them to do. In the original language, the word spiritual describes people who the Holy Spirit controls and guides. People of the flesh are people who only think about their own physical needs and desires. So when Paul says the believers are not spiritual, Paul means they are living like unbelievers who follow their own desires instead of living like followers of Christ.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who did not control their actions, but instead did whatever they felt like doing. How did that person's actions affect other people? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that spiritually the believers are infants, or babies. This is special language that means the believers are not spiritually mature, or not fully following Christ in everything. When Paul taught them in Corinth, Paul says he had to feed the believers the milk of the gospel, not solid food. Paul is saying he was like a mother who nurses, or breastfeeds, her baby. Paul means he taught the new believers in Corinth simple things that they were able to hear and accept easily, like a baby is able to drink and absorb milk easily. Paul says he could not give the Corinthians "solid food," meaning the believers were not ready to hear more challenging teaching about how the gospel should change the believers' thoughts and actions.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What words do you use to talk about a grown up person who does not act mature? If needed, look back at the stories you told in step two about the child who tries to act like an adult and also the person who knows wise sayings but acts foolishly. Pause this audio here.

In the second part of this passage, Paul strongly emphasizes, "you are still not ready." Paul means the believers are still not ready to eat the solid food of the gospel. This is because the believers are following their own selfish desires rather than following what the Holy Spirit tells them to do. Paul mentions how the believers act jealous of each other, and how this is causing strife, which means they are arguing or fighting with words. The believers want people to think they are very wise and important, and they argue about who is most important. So Paul asks, "Does this not prove that you belong to the world?" This is not a question Paul expects the believers to answer. Paul is using this question as a statement to say the Corinthians are acting like unbelievers.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you talk about the differences between babies who only drink milk and adults who eat solid food? How will you make it clear that Paul is comparing the Corinthian believers to babies? Pause this audio here.

Paul makes his point even more strongly by asking a second question: "Are you not acting like people of this world?" In the original language, this question and the question Paul asked before are part of the same sentence. It is as if Paul is saying, "are you not of the flesh, or worldly, and behaving like ordinary people?" By asking two questions together as one, Paul makes his statement even stronger. Paul is saying that the believers are not only acting like unbelievers, but they are also acting foolishly.

In the original language, Paul is saying that the Corinthians are "walking around" like ordinary people. This is special language that means how a person lives and behaves in normal everyday life. Paul is saying that people are not spiritually mature just because they say the right things. They are spiritually mature when they act correctly in everyday life.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do you decide if someone is wise? What words or actions make a person wise? If a person says wise things, but they do things that are not wise, how do you talk about that person? Pause this audio here.

In the third part of the passage, Paul asks a third and final question that he does not expect the Corinthians to answer. This question not only strengthens what Paul just said, but it also reminds the believers of what Paul said in the last passage. Paul asks, "For when one of you says 'I follow Paul,' and another, 'I follow Apollos,' is this not how ordinary people act?" Paul is not saying that just one person is saying these things or following different teachers. These are examples of how everyone in the Corinthian church is talking and dividing into separate groups. Paul says that when the believers do this, they act just like the world, or like unbelievers.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to have drawings or objects to represent Paul and the Corinthian believers, as well as keywords Paul uses, like "spiritual" and "mature." Then, as you begin to retell the story, it may help to visualize how Paul changes how the Corinthians think about each word as he moves through this part of the letter.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers
- Christ
- And the Holy Spirit

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In this passage, Paul uses special language and examples to show the church in Corinth that what they think is spiritual is actually fleshly, and what they think is mature, or wise, is actually immature.

In the first part, Paul tells the believers that when he was in Corinth, Paul taught as if they were baby Christians, not mature Christians. Paul says he could only give the believers the milk of the gospel, because they were not ready for solid food. Paul means he taught what the believers could easily accept, just like a baby can drink and absorb milk easily. Paul says he could not give the Corinthians "solid food," or teach about how the believers' thoughts and actions should change as they follow Christ.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I feel upset. The church is acting like a group of foolish children!" or
- "These believers are very confused. I need to correct their thinking," or
- "The Corinthians have become very proud. They have forgotten what it means to follow Christ."

Ask the people playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "I feel offended that Paul is calling us babies. I think we are very smart and wise!" or
- "I feel embarrassed that Paul says he could only give us the milk of the gospel. I thought we were more mature than that," or
- "I like talking about the gospel, but I feel scared to follow Christ if it means I have to live, or even die, like Christ did."

Paul says that even now, the Corinthians are still acting like spiritual babies. Although they are believers, they are not living like God's Spirit shows them. Instead, they do whatever they feel like doing. Paul says the way

they are jealous and argue about who is most important proves that they are fleshly, or act like people in the world, rather than spiritual, or act the way God's Spirit shows them to act.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Holy Spirit, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I have been here this whole time, but the believers have not been listening to me," or
- "I will help believers change to become like Christ, but I will not force them."

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We felt insulted when Paul said we were fleshly!" or
- "We thought we were wise, but I guess we have been kind of foolish," or
- "Paul is right, we have been arguing a lot."

Just like Paul did in the last passage, Paul again reminds the believers how they argue about which teacher to follow. Paul says this shows that the believers are acting like people of this world rather than people who follow God's Spirit.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "The way they act proves they are not following the Holy Spirit," or
- "In case they want to argue with me, I will remind them of some specific examples," or
- "I know these people are believers, but right now they are acting like unbelievers."

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "I did not think I was jealous or quarrelsome, but I did argue about following Apollos, so maybe Paul is right," or
- "I felt offended when Paul started writing this letter, but I am starting to see that he is right," or
- "I think we have more to learn about Christ than we realized."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

At the beginning of the passage, Paul uses a word in the original language that people often translate into English as **brothers**. When Paul calls the believers "brothers," he is saying that all the believers, both men and women, have the same God, who is their father. Use the same word or phrase for brothers, or brothers and sisters, as you used in previous passages.

Paul says that when he was with the Corinthians, he could not speak to them as **spiritual** people, but as people of the **flesh**. Spiritual things are things that people cannot see or touch. God creates people with thoughts, feelings, and desires. We cannot see this part of a person, but we know it is there. In the original language, the specific word Paul uses for spiritual describes people who have thoughts and desires that the Holy Spirit controls and guides. But the word Paul uses for flesh refers to the human body. Here, Paul is talking about people who are guided by their own physical desires. So when Paul says the believers are not spiritual, but of

the flesh, Paul means these believers are living like unbelievers who follow their own desires instead of following what the Holy Spirit tells them to do. Use the same words or phrases for spiritual that you have used in previous passages. For more information, look up spirit of a person and Holy Spirit in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **people of the flesh**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says the believers are like **infants** in **Christ**, so Paul could only give the believers spiritual **milk** rather than **solid food**. Paul is using special language to show that the believers are immature and are not ready to absorb the harder teachings of the gospel. An infant is a baby who is still drinking milk from his mother's breast. Milk is the liquid that a baby drinks from its mother's breast. Solid food is food that a person has to chew in their mouth before they swallow the food. Use the same word for Christ as you have used in previous passages, and remember that Christ is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **infants**, **milk**, and **solid food**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says the believers are **jealous** of each other and this is causing **strife**. In this passage, when believers are jealous of each other, they really want the skills that other people have, so they compete against each other in a bad way. The word strife is another word for conflict between people that causes them to argue with one another. Use the same word for quarreling or strife that you used in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **jealousy**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (15234861 KB)

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1 Corinthians 3:5–9

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 3:5–9 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:5–9 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:5–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul is writing a letter to the church in Corinth, where the believers have been arguing about who is most spiritual. In the last part of his letter, Paul told the believers they are not acting spiritual at all, but instead they are acting like ordinary people in this world. Instead of following what God's Spirit says to do, the believers are

letting their own human desires tell them what to do. Paul says this is why the believers are arguing about following different human teachers, like Apollos and Paul.

Paul begins this part of his letter by asking some questions he does not expect the Corinthians to answer. Paul says, "What is Apollos, really? Or what is Paul?" This is a way of asking the Corinthians why they think Apollos or Paul are so important. Paul answers his own question by saying that Apollos and Paul are just servants who the Lord sent to the Corinthians. God sent Paul and Apollos so that the Corinthians would believe in Christ.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a big job that many people had to work together to finish. Tell about the different skills or tasks each person did to help finish the job. Once everyone finished, which person got the most honor or praise for the job? Pause this audio here.

Paul uses special language from a farm to help the Corinthians understand who is really important. Paul says that Paul is like a person who planted seeds in the ground. Apollos is like another person who then watered those seeds. Paul says that God is the one who actually made the seeds grow. The seeds are like the gospel message that Paul first shared with the Corinthians. The water is like the teaching that Apollos gave the Corinthians after Paul left. The Corinthians did not grow from the gospel message that was like the seed. Neither did the Corinthians grow from the teaching, that was like the water. It was God who made the Corinthians' trust in God to grow stronger. Paul says that it is neither the person who plants the seeds—Paul—or the person who waters those seeds—Apollos—who is important. It is only God who is important.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what kinds of plants do people grow? If you do not grow plants, what kinds of things do you grow or care for? What kinds of things do you do to make sure that the plants grow well? Pause this audio here.

Paul continues to compare the message about Jesus Christ to a seed. Paul says there is no difference between people who plant the seed and people who water the seed. Those people who plant and those people who water have the same purpose. They work together for God instead of competing against one another. The Corinthians have been comparing and judging each person to decide which person they should honor most, but Paul says they must not do this. Only God knows the true value of the work each person does, and one day God will reward each person for their work.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about how a person hired other people with different skills to do different parts of a big job. Tell how the person who hired the other people decided how much to pay each person for the different skills they helped with. Pause this audio here.

Finally, to make his point even stronger, Paul once more says that Apollos and Paul are fellow workers, or people who work together, for God. But this time Paul uses different special language to talk about God's people. This time, Paul says the believers in Corinth are like a field of crops that belong to God. The believers are also like a building or structure that God is building. Paul will say more about this idea in the next part of his letter, but the important thing to remember here is that Paul says that everyone—Paul, Apollos, and all the believers—belong to God.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:5–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul explains that Apollos and Paul are only servants who the Lord sent to the Corinthians to tell them about Christ.

In the second part: Paul uses special language to show that God is the one who is truly important. Paul is like someone who planted a seed in the ground, and Apollos is like someone who watered that seed. But that seed only grows because God makes it grow.

In the third part: Paul says one more time that Apollos and Paul work together for God. Then Paul uses a different kind of special language. Paul says the believers in Corinth are like a field, and together they are like a structure, or building, that God is building.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Apollos
- The believers in Corinth
- And God

First, think about this part of the letter all together. Remember that Paul has been writing this letter to the church in Corinth, where the believers have been arguing and dividing up to follow different leaders who they think are the most wise and spiritual. Paul has been showing the believers that what they call spiritual, and the way they are behaving, is not from God's Spirit at all. Instead, the believers are living just like people of the world.

In this part of the letter, Paul will now show that all believers are just servants of God who all work together. The Corinthians should not think of human leaders as important. The only one who is important is God himself. And only God can judge and reward what each believer does.

Paul connects this part of his letter with what he said right before about how the Corinthian believers are dividing up and following Paul or following Apollos. He shows that he is continuing to talk about Paul and about Apollos.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Paul is continuing to talk about himself and about Apollos. How will you start this part of Paul's letter to show that he is continuing this subject? Pause this audio here.

Paul asks two questions that Paul does not expect the Corinthians to answer. Paul asks, "What is Apollos, really? Or what is Paul?" We would normally talk about Paul and Apollos as if they are people, but Paul talks about them here as if they are objects that are not alive. Maybe Paul does this to show that Apollos and Paul only do what God allows them, or tells them, to do. Paul will explain more about this idea next.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who works hard to do something they decide to do. Now tell a story about a person who works hard to do a job someone else tells them to do. Pay attention to the different ways you talk about these two people and who makes the decisions. Pause this audio here.

Paul now answers his own question. Paul says that Apollos and Paul are just servants who the Lord sent to Corinth so that the people would believe in the good news about Jesus Christ. In the original language, the word Paul uses here for servant means someone who serves another person willingly rather than being forced. So Paul is saying that Apollos and Paul want to work for God. It was God's plan to send Apollos and Paul to help the Corinthians believe.

In the second part of this passage, Paul uses special language to show how the Corinthian believers are like a plant that God is growing. Paul says that Paul is like a person who planted seeds because God sent Paul to share the good news about Jesus. Apollos is like a person who watered the seeds because God sent Apollos to continue teaching the Corinthian believers. But in the same way that God helps a plant grow, God is the person who had to help the Corinthians believe that gospel message and grow in their faith. In the original language, Paul uses a general word for planting, rather than saying a specific type of seed or way of planting. This is because those details are not important to help the Corinthians understand what Paul means.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what is the best way to talk about this idea of planting seeds and taking care of the seeds so that they will grow? Pause this audio here.

Paul gives the important conclusion of everything he has been saying. Paul says, "So the person who plants and the person who waters are not important." Instead, God is the important person, because God is the one who makes the seeds grow.

Paul says that the person who plants and the person who waters are one, or have the same purpose or goal. Paul does not say that these people are the same. God gives each person a different task. Everyone works together to help with what God is growing. And just like a master hires people to work together on a job, Paul says God will one day give each person a wage, or payment, for the labor, or work, they do for God. When Paul says that "each one will receive their own payment," Paul believes God will pay Apollos and Paul differently. Only God knows how he will pay or reward people for their work. It is important to understand that the word "reward" or "payment" does not mean something God gives a person on earth. In fact, Paul reminds us in other letters that following Christ often leads to suffering or difficulty on earth. Paul is also not talking about people honoring believers on earth. In fact, Paul just finished telling the Corinthians not to follow or honor certain people, but instead to honor God. Paul means that God will reward people when Christ returns to earth to judge all people and make his perfect kingdom.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, are people more concerned with getting money and possessions in this life, or are they more concerned about what will happen to them after they die? In your translation, how can you show that Paul means God will reward or pay believers in the next life with Christ? Pause this audio here.

In the third part of the passage, Paul reminds the Corinthians once more that Apollos and Paul are God's fellow workers, or people who work together for God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you make it clear in your translation that Apollos and Paul work for God, not with God. God is in charge, and Apollos and Paul are only God's servants. If needed, think back to the stories you told in step two to see what words and phrases you used to describe the people in charge and the people who worked for them, or served the people in charge. Pause this audio here.

Paul introduces different special language. Paul says the Corinthian believers are like a field that belongs to God. Paul also says the Corinthian believers are like a building that belongs to God. This field is the kind of field that people plant crops in. Paul is saying that God owns the believers like someone owns a field with crops and owns a building. By talking about the believers as one field and one building, Paul again makes it clear that the believers must not divide up. Instead, the believers must follow Christ together as one church.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to use drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, Apollos, the believers in Corinth, and God.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these. As you begin to retell the story of this part of the letter, remember that Paul is using different ideas, like seeds and buildings, all to help the Corinthians understand one main thing: that God is the only one people should honor. You can act out Paul planting a seed, Apollos watering that seed, and God making the seed grow. You can also act out the Corinthians being one field together, perhaps by having them lie down on the ground. Then you can have the person playing God make some of those people stand up and then position those people in the shape of a building.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:5–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Apollos
- The believers in Corinth
- And God

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first part, Paul explains to the Corinthian believers that Apollos and Paul are not important. Apollos and Paul are only servants who the Lord sent to Corinth to tell the Corinthians about Christ.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I feel frustrated. The Corinthians should know by how I talked and acted that I did not want them to think I was important," or
- "After all that Apollos and I taught the Corinthians, I am surprised that they do not understand this already," or
- "I feel hopeful that the Corinthians will understand that Apollos and I are servants, and that the Corinthians will act like God's servants too."

In the second part, Paul uses special language to show that God is the one who is truly important. Paul says that when Paul came to Corinth and told them about the gospel, Paul was like someone who planted a seed in the ground. And Paul says that when Apollos continued to teach the Corinthians after Paul left, Apollos was like a person who watered the seed in the ground. Finally, Paul says that just like only God can cause a plant to grow, only God was the one who made the Corinthians grow spiritually.

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We feel surprised. We thought Paul and Apollos were better and smarter than other people," or
- "We feel embarrassed. We wanted Paul to think we were very spiritual," or
- "We feel disappointed. We thought that being Christians would make us better than other people, but Paul is saying we will always be like servants."

In the third part, Paul says once more how Apollos and Paul work together for God. This means that Apollos and Paul do not compete against each other. Then Paul uses a different kind of special language. Paul says the believers in Corinth are also like a field that people plant crops in. And together, the believers are like a structure that God is building.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Apollos, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I agree with Paul. I wish the believers would stop acting like we are better than other people," or
- "I hope Paul understands that I did not teach the Corinthians to think this way," or
- "I am happy that Paul is saying these things to the believers. They should respect what Paul says, because Paul was the one who first told the Corinthians about the gospel."

Now ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I feel angry. The Corinthians are acting very proud and not honoring me like they should," or
- "I feel sad. The Corinthians have forgotten how different my plan is from the false religions they followed before," or
- "I feel happy with Apollos and Paul for how they serve me and give me the honor instead of taking that honor for themselves."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:5–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul says that Apollos and Paul are servants of God. The word for servant in this case is a man or a woman who works for another person. This worker is not a slave who another person forces to work for them. If you are a servant, you usually have a low position in the community.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **servant**. Look up servant in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

God helped the Corinthians **believe** in Christ through the things that Paul and Apollos taught. Use the same word or phrase for believe as you used in previous passages. For more information on belief, refer to the Master Glossary.

Paul says that the **Lord assigned** Apollos and Paul to teach the Corinthians the gospel. Use the same word for Lord as you have used in previous passages, and see Lord in the Master Glossary for more information. To assign means to give someone a specific task or job to do.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **assigned**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul talks about how the work Paul and Apollos did among the Corinthians was like **planting** and **watering** seeds so that God will make it **grow**. A **seed** is the small part of a plant from which a new plant can grow. People can collect the seeds of a plant and put it in the soil to grow more plants. When a person does this, it is called planting. After the person puts the seed into the soil, someone must regularly put enough water into the soil to help the plant grow. This is called watering. In the original language in this part of the letter, Paul does not use the word for seed, but you may use it if you need to be clear about the things they are planting and watering.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **plant**, **water**, and **grow**. Look up seed in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that God will give each person a **reward** or **payment** for their **labor**. A reward is something that someone gives to you because of something you did or earned. Usually a reward is something good, but if you do something wrong, you might get a bad reward, or punishment. To labor means to work. If someone gives you a reward for your labor, it usually means a type of payment for the work you did for them.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **reward** and **labor**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says the Corinthian believers are like God's **field** and also like God's **building**. A field is a piece of land that people use for growing crops or trees to produce food. In the original language, this specific word for field is only used as special language for how God cares for and nurtures his people. It does not mean actual land. Similarly, in the original language this word building means to construct, or put together, a structure that God can live inside. Paul is using this word to describe how God is changing the way the Corinthian believers think and act to show unbelievers what God is really like.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **field** and **building**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 3:5-9

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 3:10–17

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 3:10–17 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:10–17 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:10–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul continues to write his letter to the church in Corinth, where the believers have been arguing about who is the best teacher. At the end of the previous part of his letter, Paul began to compare the church community in Corinth to a building that God is building.

In this part of his letter, Paul continues to talk about this structure. Paul says that God gave Paul the grace, or ability, to lay the foundation of this building. Paul did not deserve the ability to be able to lay this foundation, but God gave him the ability because God is kind. When someone lays a foundation, they make the first part of a building that people can build the rest of the building on top of. The foundation needs to be strong in order for the building to remain strong.

Stop here and look at a photo of a building foundation from the time of Paul. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, when you want to build a strong building that will last a long time, what do you put down first? Do you make a foundation with something like stones or concrete? Do you set posts deep in the ground, or put up a center pole? Pause this audio here.

Paul says he built this foundation like a wise builder, or someone who knows how to build a strong structure. Here, Paul is talking about when he came to Corinth and told the people about Christ and his death on the cross for the first time. The Corinthians had never heard these truths about God's plan before. But through Paul's teaching, some of the people in Corinth became believers, or people who follow Christ. The group of new believers became the church in Corinth. Paul says that Jesus Christ himself is the foundation of the church. Although other people besides Paul will continue to teach the community of believers, people grow spiritually strong because they know Christ himself and follow him.

Paul now gives a strong warning. Every person who teaches or leads in the church must be very careful what they teach. Teaching is like building the foundation of a building. No one can lay a different foundation than the one God already laid, which is Jesus Christ. Paul is warning people not to teach things or do things that do not agree with the true teaching about Jesus Christ and his crucifixion.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about someone who built on a bad foundation. Maybe they built on sand instead of stone, or they set their poles on top of the ground instead of digging down deep. Why did they build the structure badly? What happened to the structure they built badly? Pause this audio here.

Paul continues to talk about the church, or community of believers, as if it were a building. Paul says that when people build on a foundation, some workers use long-lasting materials like gold, silver, or precious stones. Other workers use materials that will not last, like wood, dried grass, or straw. Paul means that some people do things or teach things that help the church listen to God's Spirit and become more like Christ. But others do things or teach things that cause people to not follow Christ well.

Paul says that people will see how well each leader or teacher helped build the church when Christ judges the teacher's work with fire on "the Day." "The Day" is the time when Christ will return to judge the world. God talks about judging people and things in the same way that fire tests materials to see if they are strong. Paul says that when Christ returns to judge the world, Christ will test the quality of each person's work to see if it is good. If the person's work is good, God will reward them. But if that person's work is not good, God will destroy the work. However, God will save that person in the same way a person escapes a fire by running through the fire quickly to escape it.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a house or some kind of structure that fire destroyed. What kind of things in that house completely burned up in the fire? What kind of things did not burn up? Pause this audio here.

Why is it so important to build the church well by teaching good things and taking care of the church well? Because the church is God's temple, so the church is the place where God's Spirit lives. You will remember that the Jewish temple was the place where God met with his people and where people worshiped God. Another name for the temple is the house of God. Paul had taught the Corinthians that the church, or the believers who follow Jesus together, are now the temple or house of God.

Paul says that if anyone destroys this temple, or the community of believers, God will destroy that person. This is a very serious warning. Paul warns that God will destroy anyone who teaches things that destroy the church. God will destroy anyone who causes the believers to split apart or follow ideas other than Christ and his death on the cross. Paul says this is because the community of believers is holy, or set apart, as the special place where God's Spirit lives. The church is holy in the same way that the temple structure where the Jewish people worshiped God was holy.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:10–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul says that when he taught the Corinthians about Christ for the first time, he was like a person laying a strong foundation so that other people can build on top of that foundation. Paul warns that no person can build on a different foundation than Jesus Christ.

In the second part: Paul says Christ will one day reward people who build onto this building with materials that will last. But Christ will punish people who build with materials that will be destroyed on the Day when Christ judges that work.

In the third part: Paul reminds the Corinthians that the church, or the community of believers, are God's temple, and that God's Spirit lives among them. So if someone destroys that community, God will destroy that person. This is because the community of believers is holy, just as the physical temple where the Jewish people worship God is holy.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God
- Jesus Christ
- God's Holy Spirit
- People who teach things that will survive the Day of Judgment
- People who teach things that God will destroy on the Day of Judgment
- The church, or community of believers, in Corinth
- And the person who destroys God's temple

First, think about this part of Paul's letter as a whole. Remember that Paul has been writing this letter to the church in Corinth, where the believers have been arguing and dividing over different teachers. In this passage, Paul will show that other teachers can help the Corinthians keep growing spiritually only if the teaching also builds on the gospel of Jesus Christ. And if anyone destroys God's community of believers, God will destroy that person.

At the beginning of the passage, Paul says that it was God's grace, or gift, that allowed Paul to lay the foundation of the gospel in Corinth. Paul was like a worker who lays a foundation for a building to make it strong. Many people will help build on this foundation, and Paul says that each person must build carefully. Paul may be thinking specifically of leaders in the Corinthian church. Paul will show in a moment that God gives all Christians a responsibility to build the church spiritually.

Paul reminds the Corinthians that the foundation of the church is Jesus Christ himself. When Paul calls Christ the foundation, Paul is using special language from the book that the prophet Isaiah wrote in the Old Testament. There, God had said he would lay a foundation of stone. God was talking about the Messiah or promised Savior that God would send, who is Christ. Paul is saying that God actually laid this foundation himself by sending Paul to tell the Corinthians about Christ. Anything that Paul did or taught the Corinthians was only because of God's grace, or kindness. God also said in Isaiah that instead of recognizing the Savior, or Christ, as the foundation stone, many people would stumble over that stone. This too is a warning to the Corinthians not to stumble by following false teaching about Christ.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about someone who builds a house. Pay attention to the words you use to describe the first step of laying the foundation so the house will be strong. If needed, look back at what you discussed in step two about how you build a strong building in your culture. Pause this audio here.

In the second part of the passage, Paul talks about the way God will either punish or reward people for the way they build. Here, Paul is not just talking about leaders, or teachers, in the church. Paul is talking about all believers. Paul says the materials people build with are either strong like gold, silver, and precious stones, or weak like wood, dried grass, and straw. Paul is not trying to show how the materials have different values. The important point is how well each material will last in a fire. This is important because Paul is going to show that Christ will test what each person has built when Christ returns to judge the world. Paul calls Christ's return "the Day," or in a previous passage, "the day of our Lord." In the original language, the idea of "the Day" comes from the Old Testament. In those passages, prophets say that Christ will come to save believers and destroy the earth. The Old Testament prophets also say that Christ will judge the believers' work with fire. Paul says that if the things a believer builds survives this fiery test, God will reward the builder. Paul also says that if the fire destroys or burns up that believer's work, that person will lose their reward. Paul ends this part about fire with an important point. Paul says God will save from the fire the believer who built on Christ. Paul says this is like someone who runs out of a fire, or like someone who pulls another person out of a fire.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Gather a few different objects to look at together. Talk about which objects could survive in a fire and which would burn up quickly. Pay attention to the words you use to describe what fire does to each object. Pause this audio here.

We do not know exactly what Paul means by a reward. Perhaps Paul is talking about how God will praise each person for the work they have done. Whatever Paul means, we can be sure that believers will feel great sadness if God destroys their work by fire.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person whose house or belongings were burned by fire. How did the person respond? Pay attention to the way you describe that person's grief and sadness. Pause this audio here.

In the third part of the passage, Paul asks a question Paul does not expect the Corinthians to answer. Paul asks, "Do you not know that you yourselves are God's temple where God's Spirit lives?" Paul wants to remind the Corinthians of something important that they should already know. The word Paul uses here for temple means the inner part of the temple, the special place in the temple where God's presence lives. Together, the believers are like God's temple because God's Holy Spirit lives among them, or in them. The city of Corinth had many temples to false gods. Paul is showing strongly that there is only one true God. Paul is showing strongly that God can only have one temple in Corinth. God's temple is the community of believers themselves. This is why it is so important for the believers to be united with the same purpose instead of divided.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe a time when you compared an entire group of people to a thing like a building or an animal. Pay attention to how you compared the group of people to the thing, and talk about how you will compare the group of believers to God's temple. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that if anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. When Paul says the temple, Paul specifically means the community of believers. We do not know what Paul meant when he talked about destroying God's temple. Perhaps Paul meant that people would cause divisions over leadership or specific things people believed. Or maybe Paul was warning against teaching false things that added to God's message or took away from God's message. Whatever Paul meant, Paul says that when Christ returns, God will destroy or ruin that person who destroys God's temple.

Finally, Paul reminds the Corinthian church once more that they are God's temple. In the original language, Paul makes it clear that this temple is one thing, not many things. Paul makes it clear that many believers together are one temple. Paul ends this passage by saying that this temple is holy because it is where God lives.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to use drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, God, Jesus Christ, God's Holy Spirit, people who teach things that will survive the Day of Judgment, people who teach things that God will

destroy in the Day of Judgment, the church or community of believers in Corinth, and the person who destroys God's temple.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, remember that Paul is using these different ideas about laying a foundation and building a building to describe God's church, or the community of believers. You can show Paul laying the building's foundation and then different people building either with good materials or bad materials on top of that foundation. You can also show Christ returning to test that building with fire. You may wish to show God either rewarding people for the good work they have done or punishing them by burning up their work. You can also show the believers coming together as one group to represent God's temple with God's Holy Spirit among them. And finally, you can show someone trying to destroy the church, or the body of believers, but then have God destroy that person.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:10-17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God
- Jesus Christ
- God's Holy Spirit
- People who teach things that will survive the Day of Judgment
- People who teach things that God will destroy in the Day of Judgment
- The church, or community of believers, in Corinth
- And the person who destroys God's temple

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "God allowed me to lay the foundation because he was kind enough to give me the ability to do this. And now other people are building on top of that foundation. But people need to build carefully, because Jesus Christ is the foundation!"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I feel humbled that God let me lay the foundation by being the first person to teach the Corinthians about Jesus Christ and the cross," or
- "I worked hard to lay the right foundation for the Corinthians, so I feel worried that others will confuse them with wrong teaching," or
- "I am upset and want other teachers to understand the consequences if they teach bad things."

Ask the person playing Christ, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "The believers must understand that to follow me means they cannot follow the ideas of other Corinthian gods too," or
- "Following me can be very hard, but the reward will be worth the sacrifice!" or
- "I am pleased with Paul for all the sacrifices he has made to follow me."

Paul says, "Some workers build on this foundation using long-lasting materials like gold, silver, or valuable stones. Other workers build using materials that are not lasting, like wood, dried grass, or straw. But when Christ returns to judge, everyone will see which people's work will survive the fire. If a person's work survives, God will reward that person. If their work burns up, God will save the person, but they will lose their reward."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the people whose work survives the fire, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We feel glad that we built carefully on the foundation of Jesus Christ alone!" or
- "We feel so happy to see other believers here in God's kingdom because of what we taught."

Ask the people playing the people whose work does not survive the fire, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We are sad that our work did not please God and was destroyed!" or
- "We wish we had built more carefully on Jesus Christ alone instead of following other ideas that sounded good to us," or
- "We are grateful that although all of our work was burned up, God showed us mercy and did not destroy us!"

Paul says, "Do you not know that you are like God's temple, or special house, and God's Spirit lives among you? If a person destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person! God's temple is sacred, or holy, and you are God's temple."

Ask the person playing the Holy Spirit, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I feel very protective of the church, because that is where I live," or
- "I have the power to help the believers follow Christ, but they are acting like I am not here at all!" or
- "I am sad, because I live among the believers together as one church, but when they argue and split apart, they are not honoring me."

Ask the person playing the church or community of believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We feel afraid of how God might punish anyone who causes us to argue and split apart as a church," or
- "We did not realize how important it was to God that we follow Christ together as a church and not just on our own," or
- "We feel honored that God would want us to be his temple," or
- "We feel embarrassed about how we have been acting toward each other. If God's own Spirit is living right here among us, we should act differently!"

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:10–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

At the beginning of the passage, Paul says that by God's **grace**, Paul laid a **foundation** like a **wise** builder. Grace means to do something good for someone, or to give them something good that they do not deserve. In this case, grace may also refer to a special gift or ability that God gave to Paul because God is kind to Paul. When people lay a foundation, they set into the ground the first part of a building that will support the rest of the structure. Wise builders know how to construct a building the right way so that it will stay strong for a long time. Use the same word or phrase for wise and grace that you have used in previous passages. For more information on wisdom and grace, refer to the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **laid a foundation**. If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that other believers are now building the structure on top of the foundation, which is Jesus **Christ**. Use the same word for Christ that you have used in previous passages, and remember that Christ is in the Master Glossary.

Paul says that some people build with long-lasting materials like gold, silver, or precious stones. But others build with materials that will not last, like wood, hay, or straw. **Gold** and **silver** are rich, or expensive, metals that do not rust like iron. **Precious stones** are stones that are beautiful and also strong so that they last a long time. In the Old Testament, gold, silver, and precious stones were important materials that the Israelites used to build the temple. **Wood**, **hay**, and **straw** are all materials that people get from trees or plants. Hay is dried grass, and straw is dried stalks of grain. People can use these materials to make things, including to build structures like houses. However, these materials do not last a long time like metal and stone, and a fire can easily destroy them.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **gold**, **silver**, **precious stones**, **wood**, **hay**, and **straw**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that God will **reveal** the quality of each person's work by fire on **the Day** when Christ returns to judge their work. To reveal means to show everyone what had been secret or hidden. So to reveal by fire means to use fire to cause people to see what they could not see before. Paul uses "the Day" to mean the future time when Christ will return to earth and judge people. Christ will examine the way believers worked for him.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **revealed by fire** and for **the Day**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that if a person's work survives, they will **receive a reward**. But if that person's work is burned up, they will **suffer loss**. To receive a reward means that someone gives you something good because of something good that you have done. To suffer loss means that something good is taken away from you.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **receive a reward** and **suffer loss**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

God will **save** the person who suffers loss in the fire. The person goes through the fire and escapes. Use the same word for saved as you have used in previous passages, and see salvation in the Master Glossary for more information if needed.

Paul says that the believers in the church are God's temple. A **temple** is a place where people worship God. The temple was a physical building where people worshiped God and where God's presence lived. But in this letter, Paul taught that the believers are God's temple because **God's Spirit** lives among them. Use the same word for God's Spirit that you have used in previous passages, and see Holy Spirit in the Master Glossary for more information.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **temple**. Look up temple in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that if anyone destroys this temple, or the community of believers, God will destroy or punish that person, because God's temple is **holy**. To be holy means to be completely good, completely pure, powerful, and majestic. Use the same word for holy that you have used in previous passages, and refer to holy in the Master Glossary for more information.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 3:10-17

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 3:18–23

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 3:18–23 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:18–23 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:18–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul continues to write his letter to the church in Corinth. In the previous part of his letter, Paul reminded the Corinthians that Jesus Christ is the church's foundation. Believers must build on that foundation using the right things because Christ will one day judge each person's work. The church, or community of believers, is God's temple, and God will destroy anyone who destroys God's temple.

In this part of his letter, Paul will talk again and conclude the idea he discussed in a previous part of his letter. Paul will say human wisdom is foolishness to God. Believers must not boast about human leaders, or act as though the believers belong to those human leaders. Instead, the believers must understand that all things belong to the believers as one church. And the church belongs to Christ. And Christ belongs to God.

Paul begins by telling the Corinthians not to deceive, or to fool themselves. Any person who thinks they are wise because of what the world calls wise must become like a foolish person to become truly wise. You may remember that Paul said a similar thing in an earlier part of his letter. There, Paul said that God's foolishness is wiser than man's wisdom. By repeating this idea in a different way, Paul makes his point even stronger. Whatever the people in the world call wise, God calls foolish. Whatever God calls wise, the people in the world call foolish. Therefore, believers must either live by God's wisdom or the world's wisdom. Believers cannot follow both God and the thinking of the people in the world.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who tried to be friends with two different groups of people who were enemies of each other. How did the person try to please both groups of people? What happened when they did? Pause this audio here.

Paul now quotes, or speaks words from, two other parts of the Bible. First, Paul quotes from the book of Job when he says, "He catches the wise in their craftiness." You will remember that the book of Job was about a man named Job who suffered terrible loss and hardship. Job did not understand why God allowed these terrible things to happen to Job. Although Job said he had done nothing wrong, Job's friends thought Job was lying and that God must be punishing Job. So in this quote, one of Job's friends is saying that God is wiser than people. Job cannot trick, or be smarter than, God. By saying this quote, Paul is reminding the Corinthians that God is wiser than people. Paul is reminding the Corinthians that people cannot be smarter than God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a group of people who did an activity well. Tell how one person did the activity differently than everyone else because they thought they were more clever, but they really were not more clever. What happened to that person? Pause this audio here.

Next, Paul quotes from the book of Psalms when he says, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." This means that God knows that the plans and ideas that people of the world call wise are actually worthless and will not help anyone. Instead, God's plan through Christ is the only true wisdom. God's plan is the only one that will last forever.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when an unimportant or surprising person came up with a good plan to solve a big problem. How did others respond when that person's idea worked? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Now tell a story about a time when an important person came up with a bad plan to solve a big problem. How did others respond when that person's idea did not work? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that because of all the true things he just said, the believers must stop boasting about human leaders, because God has given the believers all things. Paul says that Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life, death, the present, and the future all belong to the believers, because God has given them these things. To make this point even stronger, Paul says a second time that God has given the believers all things, meaning God has put them in charge of all things. God even controls the things in the world like life and death, suffering, and what happens in the future. Paul also reminds the believers that they belong to Christ, meaning Christ is in control of the believers. And Christ is God's, meaning Christ belongs to God and Christ does the things God asks him to do to save the world.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about the types of leaders and their responsibilities in your culture. For example, who is responsible for making the biggest decisions over the largest group of people? Who are the next-most-important leaders who take orders from that biggest leader but who also make important decisions over smaller groups of people? When a leader must make a specific decision, how do you know which type of leader must make it? Pause this audio here.

What Paul is saying is that the believers must stop acting like God created the believers to serve human leaders, or as if the world is in charge of the church. Instead, Paul says God sent these human leaders to serve the church. Christ belongs to God, the church belongs to Christ, and the church's leaders belong to the church. Therefore,

instead of letting the world's wisdom tell the church how to think and act, the church must show the people in the world that God's wisdom and plan is opposite of, or completely different from, the world's. The believers must do this by following Christ alone, as one unified church, rather than boasting and arguing like the world does.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:18–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul tells the believers not to deceive themselves. If a person thinks they are wise like the world, they must become a fool to be truly wise. This is because the world's wisdom is foolishness to God.

In the second part: Paul quotes two Old Testament books to make his point even stronger. The first quote says God catches the wise in their own clever traps. The second quote says the Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are useless.

In the third part: Paul says that because what he said is true, the believers must stop boasting about following certain human leaders. Paul says everything belongs to the believers, whether the leaders like Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life and death, or the present and the future. Paul says once more that all things belong to the believers. And the believers belong to Christ. And Christ belongs to God.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers in the church
- People the world says are wise
- People God says are wise
- Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, or Peter
- Christ
- And God

First, think about this part of the letter all together. Remember that Paul has been writing this letter to the church in Corinth, where the believers have been arguing and dividing up to follow different teachers who the believers think sound the wisest. In this part of the letter, Paul will once again explain how God's wisdom is the opposite of human wisdom. Then Paul will tell the believers not to boast about following human leaders. Finally, Paul will show how God's rules about which people are in charge are very different from the world's rules that the believers have been following.

Paul begins the first part with a strong statement. Paul says, "Stop deceiving yourselves." You will remember that in the last passage, Paul warned the believers that when Christ returns one day to judge the world, only the valuable things believers build will survive. Now, Paul is about to warn that the things God calls valuable, or wise, are what the world calls foolish. And what the world calls wise, or valuable, is what God calls foolish. So the believers must not deceive themselves by believing what the world says is valuable. All the world's wisdom is worthless and will end in nothing, or be destroyed.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who acted as if something was true that was not true. How did people feel about them? What happened to that person? Think about the way you described that person who thought something was true that was not true. What words or phrases did you use to talk about how they were lying to themselves, or deceiving themselves? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that if any of the believers think they are wiser than the rest of the believers, those people should become fools by the world's standards. In the original language, the words Paul uses almost certainly mean that some of the believers in Corinth do think they are wiser than everyone else. But Paul says this wisdom is "of this age." In the original language, this phrase refers to the current time when the world's standards, or system, lead people's thinking and behavior. So by using this phrase, Paul reminds the believers that although most people follow the world's standards right now, Christ will soon return to judge the world using a different standard.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what are the rules, or standards, that people follow to show them how to think or act? How do you talk about these rules? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the world's wisdom is foolishness to God. In other words, people of the world think completely opposite from how God thinks. The world and God have very different standards and values. What the world considers wise, God considers foolish.

In the second part of this passage, Paul quotes, or says some words from, two different books in the Old Testament. To show that these are quotes, Paul says, "As it is written...." Paul does not say what book Paul is quoting. However, these are the same words we find in two other books of the Bible. Paul's first quote is from the book of Job, which says, "He catches the wise in their craftiness." This is special language that means that just like a hunter catches an animal in a trap, God causes people who try to outsmart God to get trapped by their own foolish thinking. Next, Paul quotes from the book of Psalms and says, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are useless." Here, Paul makes one small change. Where Psalms says, "men," Paul says, "the wise men or wise people." This quote means that the world's wisdom is useless. So by putting these two quotes together, Paul is saying that like a hunter catches animals in a trap, God will catch these foolish people in their own "wise" ideas. Their own wise ideas will not last long.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, if you want to quote words that someone else has written or said in the past, how do you tell people that you are quoting and not making the words up yourself? In your translation, how will you show that Paul is quoting from people who wrote long ago? Pause this audio here.

In the third part of this passage, Paul uses a special phrase in the original language to give an instruction, or command. This phrase shows that Paul is giving this command because of the true things he already told the Corinthians. Paul is saying, "Because God's wisdom is different from the world's wisdom, do not boast about which human leaders you follow. Everyone belongs to you including Paul, Apollos, and Peter, and everything is yours, including the world, life and death, the present and the future." Paul is saying that while the believers say they belong to different human leaders, all things, including those leaders, actually belong to the believers. Even death has no authority over the believers, because they will all be with God forever. And now, to make this point even stronger, Paul says once again that all things belong to, or are under the authority of, all the believers together. This is because the believers are under the control of God himself. The believers belong to Christ. And Christ belongs to God. It is important to know that Paul is not saying that Christ is below, or less than, God; instead, Paul is saying that Christ does what God tells him to do. Christ and God work in unity, and God has complete control over all people and all situations.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do you talk about the things that a person owns or is responsible to care for or control? How do you talk about the things or people who someone else cares for or controls? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to use drawings, objects, or even people to represent each character in this passage. The characters are Paul, the church or group of believers, people the world says are wise, people God says are wise, Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, Christ, and God.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these characters. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, remember that Paul is showing how God's wisdom is the opposite of human wisdom. To show this, you could show the people the world calls wise acting proud. You could have the believers follow that group of people and act very impressed. Then you could have God show that they are wrong. Next, you could have the group of people who God calls wise stand to one side to show that they are different. You could have the people the world calls wise come over to that side and act like they are making fun of these wise people. You could

then show different believers line up in front of either Paul, Apollos, or Peter. You could have the believers pointing at their leaders and showing which person they each have chosen to follow. Then you could have Paul come and line people up differently to show God's rules are different for who is in charge. First, line Paul, Apollos, and Peter up side-by-side. Then line up all the believers in front of them to show the believers are in charge. Then put the person playing Christ in front of the believers. And then put the person playing God in front of Christ.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:18–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers in the church
- People the world says are wise
- People God says are wise
- Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, or Peter
- Christ
- And God

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "Do not lie to yourselves. If you think you are wise in the ways of this world, you must get rid of your cleverness in order to become truly wise. God thinks the things this world calls wise are actually foolish."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I feel impatient with the believers. They should understand all of this by now," or
- "I know it sounds like I am saying the same things I said before, but saying it different ways will help them understand and remember," or
- "Some of the people in the church will probably say I sound foolish, but that is because they think the way the world thinks."

Ask the believers in the church, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "Some of us felt offended when Paul said we are lying to ourselves. What makes Paul think he knows everything?" or
- "What Paul said is really difficult to accept. We want to follow Jesus, but we do not want people to think we are fools!" or
- "Most of us trust Paul very much. We are surprised by this teaching, but we feel grateful that Paul is telling us the truth."

Paul says, "Scripture proves that I am telling the truth where it says, 'He catches those who are wise in their own clever traps.' And another Scripture says, 'The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are worthless.'"

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing those the world says are wise, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "Paul is crazy. Some of the wisest people in the world live in Corinth. These people are very important, not worthless!" or
- "We are obviously much wiser than Paul. If he believes these things, he must be more foolish than we thought," or
- "We are too smart to be caught in a trap, even by God himself!"

Ask the people playing those who God says are wise, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We feel hurt when people ignore us or make fun of us because they think we are fools for not looking important or saying clever things like they do," or
- "We feel encouraged! Things are so hard for us in this life, but we feel hopeful because Paul says God will reward us when Christ returns," or
- "We know people think we are foolish, but we want Christ to be happy with us more than we want other people to be happy with us."

Paul says, "So stop bragging about which human leader you serve. Because Paul and Apollos and Peter all serve you as one church. Also, do not be afraid of this world, life and death, the present and the future, because God makes all of those things serve you too. And together, as one church, you serve Christ. And Christ serves God."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing Paul and Apollos and Peter, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We feel happy to serve the church, because it means we are serving Christ," or
- "We do not care if people like us or think we are wise. We just want God to be happy with us," or
- "We feel frustrated that the believers keep talking about us instead of Christ. Did they learn anything we taught them?"

Ask the people playing the believers in the church, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We are amazed that Paul is saying God made all of these things to serve us, God's church," or
- "Paul is right. We have been feeling afraid about death and the future. We wanted to become wise so we could feel in control, but Paul is helping us to see that God made these things to serve us, so we do not need to fear," or
- "We feel peace knowing that Christ is in control of us and God is in control of all things."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 3:18–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

At the beginning of passage, Paul tells the believers not to **deceive** themselves. People deceive themselves when they believe something that is not true. A person may deceive someone else by saying words that are a lie, by not telling important facts, or even through misleading actions without using any words at all.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **deceive**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that if anyone thinks they are wise in this age, they must become a fool to become truly wise. In the Bible, a person who is **wise** understands many things, and is able to make good decisions that lead to good results. However, it is God who gives wisdom to people. If a person pretends to be wise but does not accept God, then his wisdom is useless, and eventually his plans will fail. Only a person who accepts and obeys God can be truly wise. The term "this age" means the way things are in this world, or the way things are because of how people naturally think and act. In the Bible, this term is contrasted with the age to come, or the time after Christ judges all people. Use the same words or phrases for "this age" and for wise that you used in previous passages. For more information on wisdom, refer to the Master Glossary.

The world's wisdom is **folly** to God. Folly means foolishness or nonsense. Folly is the opposite of wisdom. Use the same word or phrase for folly or foolishness that you used in previous passages.

Paul quotes from the Old Testament where it says that God catches the wise in their **craftiness**. Craftiness means trickery or even evil intentions.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **craftiness**. If you have already translated this word or phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul also quotes from the Old Testament where it says that the **Lord** knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile. A Lord is someone who is a master over other people, who has full authority, and who deserves for people to give him respect. God is called the Lord because he has authority over the whole world. When people talk to God, or talk about God, they often call him Lord in order to give him respect. Sometimes it is not clear in the New Testament when the word Lord refers to Jesus, or to God the Father. Use the same word or phrase for Lord that you used in previous passages. For more information on Lord, refer to the Master Glossary.

The thoughts of the wise are **futile**, which means useless, or without meaning. All human life and human systems are ultimately useless without God, because all people and all things die and go away. God wants to show people better ways that are useful and meaningful.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **futile**. If you have already translated this word or phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the believers to stop boasting about human leaders. To **boast** about someone means to talk about that person in a way that shows you think they are very great or special. In some places in the Bible, Paul talks

about boasting in a good way, such as boasting about the Lord. But here, Paul is telling the Corinthians that boasting in people is not good. Use the same word or phrase for boast that you used in previous passages.

Paul says that all things are the believers, including Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. **Cephas** is another name for Peter, who was one of Jesus' 12 apostles and took the message about Christ and the cross to many places. Use the same word for Cephas, or Peter, that you used in previous passages.

Paul says that the believers belong to **Christ**. Use the same word for Christ that you used in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for more information about Christ, if needed.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 3:18-23

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (18989589 KB)

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1 Corinthians 4:1–5

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 4:1–5 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:1–5 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:1–5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul has been explaining to the Corinthian believers about why it is unhelpful for the Corinthian believers to think that one particular teacher is better than another. The teachers that Paul has named are Apollos, Peter, or Cephas, and Paul. In the next part of his letter, Paul mostly talks about himself and Apollos.

Now, Paul tells the Corinthian believers that it is more helpful for the Corinthian believers to think of Paul and Apollos as servants, or stewards. The servants, or stewards, that Paul is talking about are not slaves. The servants, or stewards, that Paul is talking about are people to whom masters give a responsible job. For example, a steward might be responsible to take care of the household for a wealthy owner. Paul is saying to the Corinthian believers that Paul and Apollos are like servants, or stewards of Jesus Christ, who is like the master. Jesus Christ has given Paul and Apollos the task of preaching the gospel.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe examples of a person in authority who gives somebody else a task. For example, this could be a farmer who owns a farm, who gives a task to somebody who works for the farmer. Who decides whether the person does the task well or badly? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that servants who have a task to do must be faithful. This means that the servants must be reliable and do the task well. Paul means that Paul and Apollos must be reliable and preach the gospel well.

Paul thinks the Corinthian believers will look at him and examine him like a judge in a court examines a person who is accused of doing something wrong. Paul says that he does not care what the Corinthian believers think about how Paul has acted, because Paul does not feel like he has done anything wrong. Paul says his conscience is clean. Paul says that God has given Paul the task of preaching the Gospel, so God himself will decide whether Paul has performed the task faithfully.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time when you did not care what somebody else thought about you. Why did you not care? Pause this audio here.

A lord is often a master of a household. Paul is continuing the idea of servants in a household working together, as if Jesus is the master of the household and Paul and Apollos are servants in the household. What Paul is saying is that the Corinthian believers should not judge the work of the servants, Paul and Apollos, until the master of the household, Jesus, returns.

Paul wants the believers to know that when Jesus returns, Jesus will judge, or make a final decision, about everyone based on what they have done. Paul wants the believers to know that they do not need to judge anyone now. No one knows when Jesus will come back, but God knows, and God will choose that time. When that time comes for Jesus to return, the Lord Jesus will open people's hearts and bring into the light all those things which are now hidden. In some cultures, the heart is the source of our feelings. In that culture, the heart was the source of thinking, not feeling. When Jesus opens people's hearts, he is showing what they are thinking and why they are doing the things they do.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, in which part of your body do you feel emotion with? Which part of your body do you use for thinking? When you translate this passage, you will need to use the word for the part of the body that you use for thinking. Pause this audio here.

On that day when Jesus returns, God will praise those people who have been faithful to trust and follow him. Paul wants to remind the Corinthian believers that he does not care what they think of him. The thing that matters the most to Paul is whether God says Paul is a faithful servant. Paul is telling the believers in Corinth that what should matter the most to them is whether the believers have been faithful to God. Believers who are faithful will receive a reward, or praise, from God himself.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:1–5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has 3 parts.

In the first part: Paul is explaining to the Corinthian believers that the Corinthian believers should think about Paul and Apollos as servants or stewards.

In the second part: Paul tells the Corinthian believers that Paul doesn't care that the Corinthian believers are judging Paul now.

In the third part: Paul tells the Corinthian believers not to judge anybody until the final day of judgment, which is the day when Jesus returns. Paul talks about how Jesus will judge the hearts of men and women on the Last Day.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Apollos
- The Corinthian believers
- All people who will be judged when the Lord Jesus returns
- Lord Jesus
- And God

Paul continues to talk about how the Corinthian believers should think about their teachers. In the previous passage, Paul had told the Corinthian believers what the Corinthian believers should not do, now Paul tells the Corinthian believers what they should do.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Talk about a time when you have been telling someone what they should not do, and then you change to telling them what they should do instead. Pay attention to the words and phrases you use to change to talking about what you should do instead. Pause this audio here.

Paul describes Paul and Apollos as servants, or stewards. A steward was responsible for many things. A master, or the person who owned the steward, would give the steward a job like managing the owner's household. Another example of a servant, or steward, might be a teacher who works in a school. In both examples, the servant or steward must do their task well.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a person who is responsible for something and who is accountable to a master. Pay attention to the words you use when you are talking about the person who is responsible for something. Pause this audio here.

In the second part of this passage, Paul tells the Corinthian believers that Paul doesn't care if the Corinthian believers judge him, or examine him closely. In other words, Paul thinks the Corinthian believers look at him and examine him like a judge in a court examines a person who is accused of doing something wrong. Paul says that he does not care if the Corinthian believers think that Paul has performed Paul's task faithfully or badly. Paul says that God has given Paul the task of preaching the Gospel, so God will decide whether Paul has performed the task faithfully.

Stop here and talk about what happens when a judge in a court, or an elder in a village, is examining a person who is accused of doing something wrong. What words or phrases do you use for the way they examine or investigate the accused person? Pause this audio here.

Paul starts the third part of this passage by continuing with the idea of a household working together, as if Jesus is the master of the household and Paul and Apollos are stewards in the household. What Paul is saying is that the Corinthian believers should not judge the work of the stewards, Paul and Apollos, until the master of the household, Jesus, returns. The word for judge that Paul uses here is different from the word Paul used in the previous part. This time the word "to judge" means to make a decision, or to decide whether something is good or bad, right or wrong. In other words, it means that the Corinthian believers should not decide how well or badly Paul and Apollos have carried out the task that God gave Paul and Apollos. The Lord Jesus will make that final decision himself when he returns.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about when a judge in a court, or an elder in a village, made a decision about whether a person is guilty or innocent. Pay attention to the words you use when you describe the judge, or elder, making the decision. Pause this audio here.

Paul goes on to talk about what the Lord will do when he comes back. Paul says that on that day he will open people's hearts and bring into the light those things which are now hidden. What this means is that the Lord Jesus will show everyone what people are thinking and feeling. Some translations say that the Lord will open men's hearts, but Paul means that the Lord will open all people's—men's and women's—hearts. In some cultures, the heart is the source of our feelings. For other cultures, the heart is the source of thinking, not feeling.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you talk about the Lord opening people's hearts so that everyone will see people's thoughts and motivations? Pause this audio here.

Paul makes a final, important statement about why he does not care what the Corinthians think about him. Their judgement is not important because on that day when Jesus returns, God will praise, or approve of, each person as that person deserves.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to have drawings or objects to represent Paul, Apollos, the Corinthian believers, Jesus, and God. As you retell the story, remember that Paul is talking to the Corinthian believers about how they should treat Paul and Apollos. Paul then says that Paul doesn't care what the Corinthian believers think about Paul. Show that when Jesus comes back, Jesus will judge everyone. It will be like a light shines on their thoughts and shows what everyone is thinking. Show that God praises each believer according to what they deserve.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:1–5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has 3 parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Apollos
- The Corinthian believers
- All people who will be judged when the Lord Jesus returns
- Lord Jesus
- And God

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first part, Paul is explaining to the Corinthian believers that the Corinthian believers should think about Paul and Apollos as servants or stewards. You could have Paul and Apollos standing in front of the Corinthian believers while Paul explains to the Corinthian believers about Paul and Apollos being servants or stewards.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Apollos, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I didn't like being a cause of division in the church. I hope what Paul is saying to the Corinthian believers makes a difference to how the Corinthian believers treat me," or
- "I wonder if I can look at Paul as a servant like me. I think of him as my teacher."

Ask the person playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I have been following Paul because I think he is a better teacher. I don't want Paul to be just a servant," or
- "I don't like it when Paul tells us that we have been doing something wrong."

In the second part, Paul tells the Corinthian believers that Paul doesn't care that the Corinthian believers are judging Paul now. You could have Paul standing in front of the Corinthian believers and talking to them. Or you could set up the room to look like a courtroom. The Corinthian believers would be examining Paul, and Paul would be the accused person. Paul is telling the Corinthian believers not to examine him because Paul doesn't care what they think.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "It is very difficult to do what I want to do when I know that the Corinthian believers are examining everything I do or say," or
- "I am sad that the Corinthian believers are examining Apollos and examining me, instead of doing what God asks them to do."

In the third part, Paul tells the Corinthian believers not to judge anybody until the Lord comes back to judge. Paul talks about Jesus judging the hearts of men and women on the Last Day.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I now understand that it is Jesus who judges us. It is not for me to judge other people," or
- "I have been following Apollos and thinking bad things about Paul. Now I am frightened that Jesus will not only see what I have been thinking, but also bring what I have been thinking out into the open," or
- "I am looking forward to God praising me as I deserve."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:1–5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers that they should think of Paul and Apollos as people whom God had trusted with a task, or **stewards** of Jesus **Christ**. In other words, God trusted Paul and Apollos to do an important task for him. Paul and Apollos had the responsibility of taking care of the people that God gave them, but they answered to God himself. In Paul's day, a steward like this might be responsible for managing the household of a wealthy owner. Use the same word for Christ that you have used in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for more information about Christ if needed.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will describe this person whom God has trusted to do an important job, or manage God's work for him. See steward in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that Paul and Apollos have been entrusted with the **mysteries**, or secret or hidden, things of God. The mysteries are those things which are true but that most people don't know them. For example, these are true things about Jesus and the kingdom of God. Paul and Apollos are now making these true things known. Earlier in his letter, Paul makes it clear that people can only see or understand these mysteries when God reveals them through God's Spirit. People need to know these true things so that they can live life as God wants them to. Use the same word for mysteries, or secret things of God, as you used in previous passages.

Paul says that he doesn't care if the Corinthian believers **judge** him for the way that he has been teaching the Corinthian believers about God's truths. Here Paul means that the Corinthian believers are examining Paul, or looking closely at Paul to see what Paul does, and whether Paul does those things well. This is like a judge in a court who examines a person who is accused of doing something wrong. Paul says that God has given Paul the task of preaching the Gospel, so God will decide whether Paul has performed the task faithfully. This is the same word for judge that Paul used earlier in 1 Corinthians 2:15 when he tells the Corinthians that a person with God's Spirit can judge or examine things. Use the same word here for judge.

Paul says that he has a clear **conscience** because the **Lord** is the one who judges him. Paul is not aware of anything that he has done wrong. Lord probably refers to Jesus himself when he comes back to judge people. Use the same word for Lord that you have used in previous passages, and see Lord in the Master Glossary for more information. A person's conscience is their sense of, or ability to know, what is right or wrong.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will talk about conscience. For more information about conscience, see the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers that they must not **judge** anything before **the appointed time**. Here, judge means to make a decision, or to decide whether something is good or bad, or right or wrong. After the judge in a court has examined the person who is accused of doing something wrong, the judge makes a decision about what that person's punishment will be. In other words, the Corinthian believers should not decide now how well or badly Paul and Apollos have carried out the task that God gave Paul and Apollos.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **judge** in the sense of making a decision about if a person's actions are right or wrong. This may be a different word to the word for judge that you discussed earlier. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The appointed time is another way of saying the time God chooses when Jesus will return to judge all people, both people who have died and people who are still alive. Jesus Christ will judge people based on their actions and their belief in Jesus. The appointed time is also called the Last day, or the day when Jesus Christ decides, or judges, who will be with him in heaven, and who will not be with him in heaven.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for 'the appointed time'. If you have already translated this idea in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 4:1–5

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 4:6–13

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 4:6–13 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:6–13 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.

3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:6–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul has been explaining to the Corinthian believers that they should think of Paul and Apollos as stewards, or servants. Paul has also been telling the Corinthian believers that they must not judge Paul and Apollos until Jesus returns and judges all people, and will show what everyone is thinking and feeling.

Now Paul tells the Corinthian believers that Paul is using Paul and Apollos as examples when Paul describes how the Corinthian believers should live. Paul and Apollos follow the message from God and don't follow particular teachers, and Paul wants the Corinthian believers to do the same thing.

Paul says that the Corinthian believers are arrogant. This means the Corinthian believers are proud, but in a sinful way. This is not the only time that Paul says this to the Corinthian believers. The Corinthian believers are arrogant because the followers of Apollos think they are better or more important than followers of Paul. The Corinthian believers are arrogant because the followers of Paul think they are better or more important than followers of Apollos. Paul says that if the Corinthian believers understand Paul's message, the Corinthian believers won't follow individual teachers.

The Corinthian believers are also arrogant in the way they are talking about all the good things the Corinthian believers have. The Corinthian believers seem to have forgotten that all good things come from God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who is talking in an arrogant way about something that that person has, or has done, even though somebody else has given it to the person, or somebody else has done the hard work. What do you think about the person who is talking in a proud and arrogant way? How do you act towards them? Pause this audio here.

Paul says the Corinthian believers are so arrogant that they believe that they no longer need Paul's teaching. The Corinthian believers are acting like they are already ruling in God's kingdom. Paul wishes that the Corinthian believers really were already ruling, because then Paul would be ruling with the believers too.

That is not what is happening in the church in Corinth. Paul feels like people are mistreating Paul, Apollos, and all the people that Jesus sent out to preach. Paul talks about this by describing an event that was familiar to the Corinthian believers. Rome ruled over this part of the world at that time. Roman military leaders who had just won a battle often led a special parade of people to celebrate the victory. Prisoners of war would be at the end of the parade. The prisoners had no value, and they would often be killed in front of everyone as a way to celebrate the victory. Paul talks about himself and the apostles as those people who are at the back of the victory parade. Just as lots of people gathered to watch the processions and to humiliate and kill the prisoners, Paul talks as if lots of people and even angels are watching all the apostles and humiliating them too.

Paul wants to emphasize the difference between what the Corinthian believers think about themselves, and what they think about the apostles. So Paul says things about the Corinthian believers that are actually not true, but the believers think these things about themselves. Paul says the apostles are foolish or stupid people, and the Corinthian believers are clever and wise people. Paul says the apostles are physically weak people, and the Corinthian believers are physically strong people. Paul says that other people think that the Corinthian believers are great and good people, while other people despise or look down on the apostles. Paul said those things because the Corinthian believers thought they were better or more important than other people.

Then Paul makes more statements that describe what it is like to be an apostle. Paul says that the apostles often do not have enough food or drink, and that the apostles dress in worn out and ragged clothes. Paul says people sometimes hit the apostles and that the apostles are always moving from place to place and have no home. This

description of the apostles might have reminded the Corinthian believers of other teachers in Corinth and in other towns and cities in Greece. These other teachers would travel around and teach and ask for money in exchange for teaching. However, in contrast, Paul says the apostles do manual work. We know that Paul made tents to earn money so that Paul didn't have to ask other people for money.

Paul says that the apostles work hard. Paul says that the apostles actively do good things for other people. When other people ask God to do bad things to the apostles, the apostles ask God to do good things for those people. Paul says that when other people say bad things to the apostles, the apostles do not respond at all. Paul says that when other people say bad things about the apostles to other people, the apostles say kind things to the other people.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when somebody said untrue things to you, or about you, to another person. How did you react? In your culture, how do people expect you to respond when another person says untrue things to you, or about you? Pause this audio here.

Finally, Paul says that people treat the apostles like garbage that people throw out, even though the apostles are behaving in an honorable way.

Think about this part of Paul's letter altogether. When Paul is talking about the apostles, Paul might also be reminding the Corinthian believers about Jesus.

- Paul describes the suffering of the apostles. The apostles were hungry and thirsty, the apostles were beaten, and the apostles had no home. These are also things that happened to Jesus.
- Paul says that people said unkind things to the apostles and people said untrue things about the apostles. Paul said that the apostles responded with kind and true words. These are also things that happened to Jesus.
- Paul says that the apostles are humble and are like servants. This is also a true statement about Jesus.
- Paul says that other people treat the apostles badly, like dirt and rubbish. These are also things that happened to Jesus.

Paul starts this passage by telling the Corinthian believers that Paul and Apollos are examples for the Corinthian believers to follow. In this passage, Paul does not say the name of Jesus, but Paul also wants the Corinthian believers to look at Jesus as an example.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a time when you have acted like Jesus. How could you encourage others to follow the example of Jesus in the way you act?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:6–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has 2 parts.

In the first part: Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that he has been talking about himself and Apollos as examples of how the Corinthian believers should behave. Paul tells the Corinthian believers that they are arrogant and proud in the way they follow individual leaders. Paul says that the Corinthian believers think of themselves as if they are kings.

In the second part: Paul talks about the low position of all the apostles, and how other people behave towards, and speak to, the apostles.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Apollos
- Corinthian believers
- Other apostles
- All the people of the world
- Angels
- And people who say untrue things about the apostles

In the first part of the passage, Paul starts by calling the Corinthian believers "brothers," or "brothers and sisters." Paul is not saying that the Corinthian believers are his real brothers. This is a term of affection that Paul uses for all the Corinthian believers, both men and women.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers that Paul and Apollos are examples for the Corinthian believers to follow. Paul tells the believers to "not go beyond what is written." This was likely a familiar saying to the Corinthians, but its exact meaning is not clear today. Paul might be referring to earlier parts of his letter where he quoted from Scripture, or his own words, or a general rule for life that everyone knew. Paul is telling the Corinthians to follow the teachings and examples that teachers gave to the Corinthians. Paul is telling the Corinthians not to create their own rules or think they know better.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers that the Corinthian believers are arrogant. The word Paul uses to describe the Corinthian believers means "puffed up." It is the same word you would use to describe blowing air into a tire, or a ball. Arrogant people think that they are more important than other people. Paul says that the Corinthian believers are arrogant because they think that whichever teacher they follow is better than the teacher that the others follow.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a person who is puffed up, or arrogant and proud. Pay attention to the words you use to describe this person. Pause this audio here.

Paul then asks the Corinthian believers three questions that Paul does not expect the Corinthian believers to answer. Paul asks, "What makes you special compared to other people? Do you have anything that was not given to you? If everything you have God gave to you, why do you behave as if it was always yours?" Paul does this to emphasize that the Corinthian believers are boasting or talking about all the good things that the Corinthian believers have or that the Corinthian believers can do.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a person who thought that he was very important, or clever, and who talked about himself to other people who didn't agree with him. Pay attention to the words you use to describe the person and the way that person speaks. Pause this audio here.

Paul continues by making three statements about the Corinthian believers. The statements are not true, but the statements say what the Corinthian believers think is true. Paul often uses three statements or three questions. Paul does this to emphasize that what Paul is saying is important. Here Paul says that the Corinthian believers have all the things they want, that they are already rich, and that they are already reigning like kings. In other words, the Corinthian believers think that they have everything they need.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Get one person to talk to the group about something that is very important and that the group needs to know. As a group, pay attention to the words, and gestures, that the person who is talking uses to make sure the group understands what they are saying. Pause this audio here.

In the second part of the passage, Paul talks about the apostles, including Paul himself, Apollos, and all the other people that God chose to preach and teach the gospel.

Paul uses special language to describe the apostles. Paul says that it seems like the apostles are the people who were at the end of a Roman military leader's special procession. Or, Paul says, it seems like the apostles are similar to the people who died in a Roman arena, which is a large round area where Romans often had violent

competitions and games. Just like many people watched the Romans kill people in the arena, many people watched how the believers treated the apostles and did nothing to stop the bad treatment. Even the angels in heaven were watching the bad way people treated the apostles. Whatever situation Paul was actually describing, Paul was saying that people thought the apostles were not important and had no value. This is a contrast with how the Corinthian believers thought about themselves. The Corinthian believers thought they themselves were very important and very clever.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a group of people in your culture who people think are not important and have no value. Pay attention to the words and phrases and gestures that you use when you are describing this group of people and when you describe how other people treat this group of people. Pause this audio here.

Paul continues to talk about the apostles. Paul makes three statements about the Corinthian believers and the apostles, and he uses three pairs of words that have completely opposite meanings. Paul does this to emphasize the difference between what the Corinthian believers thought about themselves, and what they thought about the apostles. What Paul says about the Corinthian believers is not actually true, but it is what the Corinthian believers think is true about themselves.

Paul says that people think the apostles are foolish, while the Corinthians think the Corinthians are wise. Earlier in his letter, Paul had explained that people in the world think that God's wisdom is foolish. You will remember Paul said that someone who seems wise needs to accept the "foolishness" of the gospel to find God's true wisdom. Paul says the apostles are physically weak people, and the Corinthian believers are physically strong people. Paul says that people respect or honor the Corinthian believers, but they despise or disrespect the apostles. Paul uses those three statements to compare the apostles to how the Corinthian believers think about themselves.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about two groups of people in your culture who are different from each other. For example, the two groups might be rich people and poor people. Pay attention to the words and phrases and gestures that you use when you are describing these groups of people to emphasize the differences between them. Pause this audio here.

Paul continues to talk about the apostles. Paul says that the apostles are often hungry and thirsty, and that the apostles dress in worn out and ragged clothes. Paul says that people sometimes hit the apostles. In the original language, this could mean that people spoke badly to the apostles, or that people actually treated the apostles with violence. Paul also says that the apostles are always moving from place to place, and they have no home.

Paul continues to talk about how the apostles react to the people who mistreat them. Again, Paul makes three statements, and each statement has two opposite actions. Paul says that when people curse the apostles, the apostles respond with a blessing. Paul might be reminding the Corinthian believers about the teaching of Jesus, "bless those who curse you." Paul says that when people persecute or mistreat the apostles, the apostles are patient. Paul might be wanting the Corinthian believers to remember how Jesus responded during his trial and crucifixion. The third statement that Paul makes is to say that when people say untrue things about the apostles, the apostles respond with kind words.

Paul finishes by saying that the apostles have become like dirt or garbage. In the original language, these two words mean almost the same thing. The two words describe the dirt or waste that is cleaned away, like sweepings from a floor, or dirt which is scraped from the body of a person. Both words are therefore used to describe something that people think is worthless or disgusting.

Think about this part of the letter altogether. Paul tells the Corinthian believers that what the Corinthian believers are doing and saying show that they are proud and arrogant. In contrast, Paul tells the Corinthian believers about the hard things that the apostles experience. This shows that the apostles are humble.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a group of people who are proud and arrogant, and a group of people who are humble. Pay attention to the words, phrases, and gestures you use when you talk about these two groups of people. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

When you are visualizing the part of the passage where Paul talks about the apostles being at the end of a special parade of people, remember that Paul is only describing a picture—it is not actually happening. When Paul is talking about the apostles, you may want to show that the Corinthian believers thought the Corinthian believers were better than, or more important than, the apostles. You may want to put Paul and Apollos in the same place as the other apostles to make it clear the differences between the Corinthian believers and the apostles.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:6–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has 2 parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Apollos
- Corinthian believers
- Other apostles
- All the people of the world
- Angels
- And people who say untrue things about the apostles

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first part, Paul addresses the Corinthian believers as "brothers and sisters." Paul talks about Paul and Apollos as examples, and tells the Corinthian believers that they are arrogant and proud in the way the Corinthian believers follow individual leaders. Paul says that the Corinthian believers are boasting, or talking proudly, about all the good things that the Corinthian believers have, and that the Corinthian believers are forgetting that all good things come from God. Paul then says that the Corinthian believers are behaving like kings who are important and have everything they need.

You could have Paul and Apollos standing in one part of the space, and the Corinthian believers in a different part of the space. Perhaps the Corinthian believers could be in two groups, one group who follow Paul and one group who follow Apollos.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I love the Corinthian believers, but I don't like the things that the Corinthian believers do," or
- "I love the Corinthian believers. They are like my family, but they have forgotten that they still have much to learn."

Ask the person playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I love Paul, but I don't think he loves us anymore!" or
- "Paul is not being kind to us. We are doing so well, but Paul does not seem to agree with us."

In the second part, Paul talks about the low position of all the apostles, and how other people behave towards, and speak to the apostles. Paul describes the apostles and says that the apostles are similar to the people who were at the end of a Roman military leader's special procession. Or, Paul says, the apostles are similar to the people who died in a Roman arena. The people watching the apostles are not just all the people in the world, but also those who live in the heavenly places. Remember, this is not actually happening. Paul is using special language to describe a picture to help the Corinthian believers understand what it is like to be an apostle.

You could have a group representing the Corinthian believers and the heavenly beings gathered around the apostles who are in the center of the group.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the apostles, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I know this is not really happening, but I hope it helps the Corinthian believers understand that it is hard to be an apostle," or
- "I know this is not really happening, but I am glad that I am not on my own. I am glad I am with the other apostles."

Ask the person playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I know this is not really happening, but it is helping me to understand that it is very hard to be an apostle," or
- "I know this is not really happening, but I am beginning to feel ashamed that I have been so proud and arrogant."

Ask the person playing the heavenly beings, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I wish the Corinthian believers could understand how much Paul and the other apostles love them. I wish the Corinthian believers could understand that Paul and the other apostles are willing to be treated like this so that the Corinthian believers can hear the truth of the gospel."

Paul continues to talk about the apostles. Paul makes three statements and compares the apostles to the Corinthian believers. Paul then says more things about how other people treat the apostles.

You could have two groups. One group is the apostles. The other group is the people who treat the apostles badly and who say untrue words to the apostles and about the apostles.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "A lot of the things that happen to me or to the other apostles are not good things, but it is worth it because we know we are doing what God has asked us to do," or
- "I hope this helps the Corinthian believers to understand that being followers of Jesus isn't always easy."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:6–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul begins this part by calling the Corinthian believers **brothers**. Use the same word for brothers, or brothers and sisters, that you have used in previous passages.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers that the Corinthian believers are **puffed up**. This is the same word you would use to describe blowing air into a tire, or a ball. Another word for puffed up is **arrogant**, or **proud** in a sinful way. Puffed up people, or arrogant or proud people, think that they are more important than other people. When arrogant or proud people talk about the things that they have done or the things they have, this is called **boasting**. "Puffed up" or arrogant or proud are the opposite of **humble**. A person who is humble does not think they are better than, or more important than, other people.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for the words **puffed up**, **arrogant**, **proud**, **boasting**, and **humble**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says to the Corinthian believers that the Corinthian believers have started to **reign**, or be like a **king**. A reign is a period of time when a king rules a country or an area of land. Paul means that the Corinthian believers think that the Corinthian believers are like kings.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "starting to reign" or "be like a king." Look up king in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul talks about the **apostles**. Use the same word or phrase for apostles as you used in previous passages. For more information on apostles, refer to the Master Glossary.

Paul talks about **angels**, which are spiritual beings that God made to worship him and give his messages to people.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **angels**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word for angels here. Look up angels in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Paul describes the Corinthians as **wise**, and the apostles as fools for **Christ**. Use the same word for Christ and wise that you have used in previous passages. For more information on Christ and wisdom, refer to the Master Glossary.

Paul says that when people **curse** the apostles, or wish bad things on the apostles, the apostles respond by **blessing**, or wishing good things, on the people.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **bless** and **curse**. Look up curse and bless in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that people **persecute** the apostles. When people persecute others, they treat them cruelly or unfairly.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **persecute**. For more information, look up persecution in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

At the end of this passage, Paul describes the apostles as becoming like **dirt** or **garbage**. These two words mean almost the same thing. The two words describe the dirt or waste that people clean away, like sweepings from a floor, or dirt that people scrape from the body of a person. Both words are therefore used to describe something that people think is worthless or disgusting.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **dirt** and **rubbish**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 4:6-13

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 4:14-21

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 4:14-21 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:14-21 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:14-21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul has been telling the Corinthian believers that what they are doing and saying show that they are arrogant in a sinful way. Paul has also been telling the Corinthian believers about the apostles and the hard things that the apostles experience. Paul wanted the Corinthian believers to understand that the Corinthian believers are not acting in a good way.

Now, Paul says that Paul is writing to the Corinthian believers because Paul wants them to understand that they need to think, speak, and act in a different and better way. He is not trying to make them feel bad about what they have been doing and saying.

In the previous part of his letter, Paul called the Corinthian believers his brothers and sisters. Now Paul describes the Corinthian believers as Paul's children. Paul does not mean that the Corinthian believers are Paul's real children. Paul is saying that the Corinthian believers are Paul's spiritual children. Paul is the spiritual father of the Corinthian believers because Paul is the one who taught the Corinthian believers to follow Jesus.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do you describe or understand how spiritual leaders relate to their followers? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that many people—too many people to count—have taught the Corinthian believers about Jesus, but the Corinthian believers only have one father. These teachers are like the slaves in Greek and Roman households who were responsible for the education of the children of the household. These slaves would take the children to school. In other words, Paul is saying that although there are many people who will teach the Corinthian believers, Paul is the only person who teaches the Corinthian believers like a father, with both love and authority.

Paul is reminding the Corinthian believers that, as the spiritual father, Paul has the authority to tell the Corinthian believers that they are thinking, acting, and speaking in a sinful way. Paul wants the Corinthian believers to think, speak, and act in the same way that Paul thinks, acts, and speaks. Paul cannot be with the Corinthian believers in person. Paul sent Timothy to represent Paul. Paul describes Timothy as a son that Paul loves, and Paul tells the Corinthian believers to look at Timothy as an example of the way that Paul thinks, speaks, and acts as a believer. This is the same way of living that Paul teaches in all the churches that Paul has planted. We think that Timothy traveled separately from the person who took the letter to Corinth.

Paul now says that some of the Corinthian believers are puffed up, or arrogant in a sinful way, because these Corinthian believers do not think that Paul will come back to Corinth.

The Corinthian believers think that Paul is just another traveling preacher, and they do not respect him as their spiritual father. But Paul strongly rejects their attitude! He assures the Corinthian believers that Paul will visit them again once Jesus allows Paul to go. And when Paul arrives, he will see if the Corinthian believers really follow Jesus. If they follow Jesus and are citizens in God's kingdom, then that will show in the way they are living. They will not just be speaking the right things, but their lives will show that God's power—God's Holy Spirit himself—is working in them.

Paul finishes this part of the passage with a question that Paul is not expecting the Corinthian believers to answer. Paul wants the Corinthian believers to think about and decide how the Corinthian believers want Paul to visit the Corinthian believers. Paul could visit Corinth like a father who loves his children but needs to discipline or punish the children. Or Paul could visit Corinth like a father who loves the children but does not need to discipline the children. The Corinthian believers' decision will make a difference in how the Corinthian believers think, act, and speak. Paul talks about coming to Corinth with a rod, or a stick, to discipline them. A rod is a long piece of wood that masters sometimes used to hit their children or slaves. A rod is also a symbol of authority that a father has over the father's family or household. Paul does not mean that he will come to Corinth with wood in his hand. Paul means that he will come to Corinth with authority to tell the Corinthians that what they are doing is wrong.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do you see leaders or parents being strict or being gentle? What kinds of things do strict leaders or parents do? What kinds of things do gentle parents or leaders do? How do people respond to strict leaders, and how do people respond to gentle leaders?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:14–21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has 2 parts.

In the first part: Paul is saying Paul is the spiritual father of the Corinthian believers, and that the Corinthian believers are the spiritual children of Paul. Paul tells the Corinthian believers that Paul sent Timothy to the church in Corinth to be an example for the Corinthian believers to follow.

In the second part: Paul is saying what will happen when Paul visits the Corinthian believers again.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- All the Corinthian believers
- The teachers or guardians in Christ
- Timothy
- A group of the Corinthian believers who are puffed up and arrogant
- Jesus Christ

The first part of the passage begins when Paul calls the Corinthian believers "dear children." Paul explains to the Corinthian believers that Paul is not writing because Paul wants the Corinthian believers to feel bad about the things the Corinthian believers have been thinking, saying, and doing. Paul is writing to the Corinthian believers because he wants the Corinthian believers to understand that they need to think, speak, and act in a different and better way.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when a person spoke to you about your actions. Afterward, you felt you had to change the way you were acting, and you thought of yourself in a bad way. Did it change the way you thought about the person who spoke to you? Then tell another story about a time when a person spoke to you about your actions. Afterward, you wanted to change the way you were acting, but you thought about yourself in a good way. Did it change the way you thought about the person who spoke to you? Pay attention to the gestures, words, and phrases that you use when you tell both these stories. Pause this audio here.

In the previous parts of Paul's letter, he called the Corinthian believers brothers and sisters. Now Paul says that the Corinthian believers are his spiritual children. Paul says that the Corinthian believers might have many, many teachers or guardians, but Paul is the spiritual father of the Corinthian believers. Some translations say that the Corinthian believers have 10,000 teachers or guardians. This means that they have so many teachers that no one can count them all.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a teacher who is teaching a child how to act and speak in a good way, but the child acts and speaks in a bad way. Then tell a story about a father who loves his child and is teaching the child how to act and speak, but the child acts and speaks in a bad way. Pay attention to the gestures, words, and phrases that you use when you tell both these stories. Pay attention also to the differences between how a father speaks to his child, and how a teacher speaks to a child. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Remember that Paul is contrasting how many teachers taught the Corinthians with himself as their one spiritual father. How will you talk about having so many teachers or guardians that you cannot count them all? Pause this audio here.

Paul wants the Corinthian believers to look at Paul as an example of how to think, speak, and act, but Paul cannot be with the Corinthian believers. Paul tells the Corinthian believers that Paul sent Timothy to be with the Corinthian believers. Paul wants Timothy to be the example for the Corinthian believers like Paul would be. Paul loves Timothy, and Paul is also Timothy's spiritual father. Paul also describes Timothy as "faithful in the Lord." Timothy is reliable and works well alongside Paul as they preach the good news about Jesus together. It also means that Paul can trust Timothy to be a good example to the Corinthian believers.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a group of people who do not live close by. You want them to be like you and act like you, but you can't go and be with them yourself. You need somebody else to go to them and be with them. What would that person be like and what would that person do? How would you introduce this person to the group of people you are sending the person to? Pay attention to the gestures, words, and phrases that you use when you tell this story. Pause this audio here.

We do not know when Paul sent Timothy to the church in Corinth. It is likely that Paul had sent him a short time before this letter was written, or that he was going to send him very soon.

In the second part of this passage, Paul says that some of the Corinthian believers are puffed up, or arrogant in a sinful way. These Corinthian believers do not think that Paul will come back to Corinth. Paul says Paul is planning to return to the church in Corinth soon, if the Lord Jesus wants him to go. When Paul sees these puffed

up Corinthian believers, he will know if they are truly part of God's kingdom, which means that they live like good citizens in God's kingdom and follow God's rule. Their actions, not their words, will show if they have God's power to live under God's rule.

Paul finishes this passage. Paul says that the Corinthian believers need to think about and decide how the Corinthian believers want Paul to visit them. Paul could visit Corinth like a father who loves his children but needs to discipline or punish the children. Or Paul could visit Corinth like a father who loves the children but does not need to discipline the children. Paul talks about coming back with a "rod or stick of discipline," which is a long piece of wood that a father might use to punish his child. Paul will not really carry a wooden rod with him, but he uses this rod as a symbol that shows he might come to speak harshly to them or to punish them for the way they are disobeying God. What the Corinthian believers decide will make a difference to how the Corinthian believers think, act, and speak.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about an important teacher or leader who is coming back to visit you after a long time. While the teacher or leader has been away, you have been acting in a way that was not the way the teacher or leader wanted you to act. Talk about what the teacher or leader will say when he comes back if he is a harsh man. Then talk about what the teacher or leader will say if he is a gentle and kind man. Pay attention to the gestures, words, and phrases that you use when you tell this story. How will you talk about Paul coming with a "rod to discipline" his children? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to have drawings or objects to represent Paul, the Corinthian believers, the teachers or guardians, and Timothy. Some of the Corinthian believers will be the group of Corinthian believers who are puffed up, or arrogant. As you retell the story, remember that Paul is talking to the Corinthian believers about Paul's relationship as a father to the Corinthian believers, and about why Paul is saying the things that Paul is saying. Paul talks about sending Timothy to the believers to help them follow Paul's example. Paul is also talking about what will happen when Paul visits the Corinthian believers again.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:14–21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has 2 parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- All the Corinthian believers
- The teachers or guardians in Christ
- Timothy
- A group of the Corinthian believers who are puffed up and arrogant
- And Jesus Christ

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first part, Paul calls the Corinthian believers "dear children." Paul explains to the Corinthian believers that Paul is not writing because Paul wants the Corinthian believers to feel bad about the things the Corinthian believers have been thinking, saying, and doing. Paul is writing to the Corinthian believers because he wants the Corinthian believers to understand that they need to think, speak, and act in a different and better way. You could have Paul standing near the Corinthian believers with the teachers or guardians standing apart from Paul and the Corinthian believers.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I love the Corinthian believers, and I want the believers to know that I love them, even though I am saying things the believers don't want to hear," or
- "I am sad that the believers are not living like Jesus wants them to live."

Paul says that the Corinthian believers might have many, many teachers or guardians, but Paul is the only spiritual father of the Corinthian believers.

Paul wants the Corinthian believers to look at Paul as an example of how to think, speak, and act, but Paul cannot be with the Corinthian believers. Paul tells the Corinthian believers that Paul sent Timothy to be with the Corinthian believers instead, so that Timothy can be the example for the Corinthian believers. Paul loves Timothy and is the spiritual father of Timothy. You could have Timothy standing with Paul, then when Paul says that Paul is sending Timothy to be with the Corinthian believers, Timothy could start walking around as if Timothy was on the long journey to Corinth.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Timothy, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am so glad that Paul thinks that I can help the Corinthian believers to be more like Jesus," or
- "I am sad to leave Paul. I hope the Corinthian believers welcome me when I arrive."

In the second part, Paul says that some of the Corinthian believers are puffed up, or arrogant in a sinful way, because these Corinthian believers do not think that Paul will come back to Corinth. Paul says Paul is planning to return to the church in Corinth soon, if the Lord Jesus wants Paul to return to Corinth. At that time, Paul will hear what these puffed up Corinthian believers are saying. Paul will also see if the puffed up Corinthian believers have the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul says that living in the kingdom of God is not just about using words, but also about living by God's power, which means to follow God in the way they act. You could have the Corinthian believers who are puffed up, or arrogant, standing a little apart from the other Corinthian believers. Paul is talking to only the Corinthian believers who are puffed up or arrogant. Paul can ask Jesus if Paul can go to Corinth.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Corinthian believers who are puffed up with pride, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I wasn't expecting Paul to come back to Corinth again, so I have not been doing what he told us to do when he was here. I don't really want Paul to come back. My life is going really well without him," or
- "Paul says that Paul loves us, but Paul often says hard things to us."

Paul finishes this part by saying that the Corinthian believers need to think about and decide how the Corinthian believers want Paul to visit them. Paul could visit Corinth like a father who loves his children but needs to discipline or punish the children. Or Paul could visit Corinth like a father who loves the children but does not need to discipline the children. What the Corinthian believers decide will make a difference to how the Corinthian believers think, act, and speak.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing all the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am glad that Paul wants to come and visit the church again. I hope that God wants Paul to come," or
- "I am happy that Paul wants to come and visit the church again. Paul will make all the believers who are puffed up act in a better way, like me."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:14-21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul says the Corinthian believers are Paul's dear **children**, and Paul says Paul is the **father** of the Corinthian believers. Paul does not mean that the Corinthian believers are Paul's real children or that Paul is the real father. Paul is saying that the Corinthian believers are Paul's spiritual children and that Paul is the spiritual father of the Corinthian believers because the Corinthians became believers because of the teaching of Paul. Paul explains that Paul's relationship with the Corinthian believers is different from other teachers and leaders who will teach the Corinthian believers. Paul is the only person who teaches the Corinthian believers as a father, from a position of love and authority.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will describe this close relationship between Paul and the people who have become believers through the teaching of Paul. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that many people have taught the Corinthian believers about Jesus. These people are described as teachers or **guardians** or **guides**. Guardians or guides were slaves in Greek and Roman households who were responsible for the education of the children of the household. These slaves would make sure the children went to school. The guardians or guides were also responsible for teaching the children how to behave well. Paul is using the example of the guardians or guides to contrast the relationship of the guardians or guides with the children, and the relationship of a father with his children.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will describe these **guardians** or **guides**. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that he became the spiritual father of the Corinthian believers through the **gospel**. Use the same word for gospel that you have used in previous passages, and see gospel in the Master Glossary for more information.

Paul says that he became the spiritual father of the Corinthian believers in **Christ** Jesus. Paul also says that Timothy will remind the Corinthian believers about Paul's way of life in Christ Jesus. Use the same word for Christ you have used in previous passages, and see the glossary for more information about Christ.

Paul describes Timothy as being **loved**. Paul is showing a deep love and strong relationship with Timothy. It means that Paul cares for Timothy very much, as a father would care for his son. Timothy was very important to Paul.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will describe how Paul loves Timothy as a father loves his son. This is a similar idea to how Paul loves the Corinthian believers. If you have already translated this idea in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul describes Timothy as being **faithful** in the **Lord**. Servants who have a task to do must be faithful. This means that the servants must be reliable and do the task well. Paul means that Timothy is reliable and does his task well. You have already used the word faithful in an earlier passage, so use the same word here. Here, "Lord" refers to Jesus. Use the same word for Lord Jesus that you have used in previous passages, and see Lord in the Master Glossary for more information.

Timothy will remind the Corinthian believers of the things Paul has taught them, which agrees with what Paul teaches in every **church** where he goes. Use the same word for church that you have used in previous passages. Church is in the Master Glossary.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers that some of the Corinthian believers are **puffed up**. Paul used the same word in the previous passage. Remember, you have already translated these words in the previous passage, so use the same word that you have used there.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers that the **kingdom of God** is not just about using words, but also about living by God's power. The kingdom of God is not a physical place. The kingdom of God is wherever we see people accepting God as the ruler or king in their lives, and living under God's rule or authority.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for the **kingdom of God**. Look up the kingdom of God in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this idea in another book of the Bible, use the same words or phrases that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 4:14-21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 4:14-21

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 and put it in your hearts.

Before you have any group discussions for this passage, stop and decide as a group how you prefer to talk about it. This passage talks about the sexual immorality between people. In your culture, what is the best way to talk about these things? Would it be good to divide into groups of men and women for this conversation? Do you want to work in a different way than you do in other sections? Pause this audio here.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul has been telling the Corinthian believers that he loves them, and he has been encouraging them to follow his example. As Paul cannot be with the Corinthian believers, Paul is sending Timothy to be with them, but Paul has said that, if the Lord allows it, Paul will come to them soon and find out for himself whether the Corinthian believers are living and acting as part of God's kingdom.

In this passage, Paul has heard that there is a man in the church who has sinned, and is continuing to sin, by having sexual intercourse with his stepmother. A stepmother is a woman who is the wife of a person's father but who is not the person's mother. We don't know who gave Paul this information, but it must have been somebody in the church in Corinth. This is such bad behavior that it would not even happen among the pagans, or the people who do not follow the true God. The worst thing is, because the Corinthian believers are puffed up and arrogant, this behavior does not make them sad. The Corinthian believers have not disciplined the man. The Corinthian believers have allowed the man to continue doing this! Perhaps the Corinthian believers do not see that what is happening is wrong. Or perhaps the Corinthian believers think because they are followers of Jesus, they can do anything they want to do. Paul will talk to the Corinthian believers about this way of thinking later in his letter.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about when a bad thing was happening in your community and nobody was trying to stop it from happening. Why did nobody try to stop the bad thing happening? Was it because of who was doing the bad thing? Or was it because of what that person was doing? Or was it because other people didn't know what to do to stop it? Pause this audio here.

Even though Paul cannot be with the Corinthian believers in person, he is thinking about them and about this situation, and he has already decided what needs to happen to the sexually immoral man. The Corinthian believers meet together under the authority of Jesus. Paul is giving them permission and his authority as an apostle from Jesus to punish this man for the man's immoral behavior. Paul says that the man must be "handed over to Satan." Satan is the ruler of this world, that is the ruler outside the church, and God is the ruler in the church. The Corinthian believers must hand this man to Satan, which means that they must exclude this man from the church. Paul hopes that the man one day will turn away from his sins and turn back to following Jesus. Then Jesus will save the man on the Day of the Lord Jesus, when Jesus comes back to judge the believers.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when your family, or your community, put somebody out of the community because of something that person had done wrong. What did you want that person to be thinking and feeling while he was not part of the family, or community? What did the person have to do to be able to be part of the family or community again? Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers to stop being puffed up, or arrogant, and to remove the man who is guilty of sexual immorality from their church, so that he will not affect the whole community with his sinful behavior. Paul describes the sin as if it were leaven, which is like yeast and makes dough rise. Leaven is fermented dough that helps new dough ferment and rise. When people add a little leaven to dough, it affects the whole batch of dough. In Paul's time, people saved some leavened dough to mix with the new dough each week. Jews threw out all the old leaven once a year at the start of their special Passover festival, immediately before the Feast of Unleavened Bread. During the festival, the Jews would eat only bread that had no leaven in it. After the festival, they would make new leaven. Because during the rest of the year, they reused the leaven week after week, the people could get sick from the leaven, because it was not fresh. This is why the Bible often uses leaven as a picture for sin, which can spread through a group of people and make them spiritually sick.

Stop here and look at a photo of leaven and of bread that has risen because of leaven. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story of when someone was doing something bad in a small part of your family or community, and then the bad behavior spread until it affected the whole family or community. Perhaps this bad behavior is still happening. Is it easier or harder to stop it happening now than when it first began? What makes it harder to stop it now? Pause this audio here.

Although many of the Corinthian believers were not Jews, they must still have known something about the Jewish festivals, so Paul uses the example of what happens in a Jewish festival to explain why they should send the man away from the church. Paul tells the Corinthian believers that if they put the man who is guilty of sexual immorality out of the church, then the church community will be clean and pure again, as if they were a new batch of fresh dough. Paul says that because they are believers, they are already pure. Paul explains this by reminding them of the Jewish Passover festival. Paul reminds the believers that Christ's death on the cross is

like the lamb that the Jewish people sacrifice at their Passover festival to remind them that God rescued the Israelites from being slaves in Egypt. God has now rescued believers from slavery to sin by sacrificing his own son Jesus Christ on the cross. "Keeping the festival" is another way of saying that because of what Jesus has done for them, the Corinthian believers should always be joyful because they are now clean like the pure, unleavened bread. They are pure and trustworthy.

Paul uses this situation to return to something he has already said to the Corinthian believers. Paul probably told them this in an earlier letter that has not survived. We no longer have a copy of the earlier letter that Paul wrote. Previously, Paul had said that the Corinthian believers were not to mix with any sexually immoral people. Now he makes it clear that he didn't mean that they should have no contact with the sexually immoral people, or other types of sinners. That would be impossible because then they could not live among unbelievers in the world at all. What Paul does mean is that the Corinthian believers should have nothing to do with another believer who is choosing to sin. They should not even eat with these believers! In Paul's culture, eating together was important because when people ate together, it showed that they accepted each other.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you show that you accept a person or a group of people in your culture? What do you do to show that you accept them? In your culture, what kinds of people can you eat with? If you do not accept someone, what do you do to show that? Pause this audio here.

Paul asks a couple of questions that he does not expect the Corinthians to answer. Paul asks whether he should judge people outside the church. Paul also asks whether the Corinthian believers should be judging people in the church. Paul asks questions like this, which do not need an answer, to emphasize something that the Corinthian believers should already know. It is important that Paul should not be the one to decide whether those outside the church are guilty or innocent. God himself will make that decision. Believers who live in this world now are supposed to decide whether other believers inside the church are guilty or innocent and respond to the other believers correctly so that the church can be an example of right living to the rest of the world.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time in your family or your community when somebody was doing something wrong. Is it one person or a group of people who tell the person to stop what they were doing? Who gives that person, or that group of people, the authority to decide what needs to happen to that person? Pause this audio here.

Paul ends by quoting the Old Testament. Paul says again that the believers must put the wicked, or immoral, person out of the church community.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has 4 parts.

In the first part: Paul talks to the Corinthian believers about the man who is guilty of sexual immorality, and about what the Corinthian believers need to do with the man.

In the second part: Paul says that the arrogance and pride of the "puffed up" Corinthians is dangerous because it might affect the whole church.

In the third part: Paul goes back to something that he has written in a previous letter before to them, to make it clearer that he meant that the believers should not be friends with other believers who are sexually immoral.

In the fourth part: Paul talks again about judgment. He talks about who God judges and who the Corinthian believers need to judge. Paul finishes with a saying from the Old Testament, which also says that the community must send away a person who is guilty of doing bad things.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers
- The man guilty of sexual immorality
- The man's stepmother
- The Lord Jesus Christ
- Satan
- All the sinners who are outside the church
- The Corinthian believers who are deliberately sinning
- And God

Think about this part of Paul's letter altogether. Paul has heard that there is a man who is continuing to sexually sin in the Corinthian church. Paul uses this to tell the Corinthian believers that when the whole church community knows a believer is sinning, the Corinthian believers must not allow that person to remain in the community. Paul reminds the believers that when they see a person who is sinning in the church, it is their responsibility to deal with it.

Paul starts the first part by saying that a person, or some people in the church in Corinth, have told him about a man in the church who has sinned and continues to sin. The man is having sexual relations with his stepmother. A stepmother is a woman who is the wife of a person's father but who is not the person's mother. Paul says that this is such a bad behavior that it would not even happen among the people who do not follow the true God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: This passage talks about sexual sin. Sexual sin, or immorality, means doing sexual things that go against God's rules. In your culture, how do you talk about sexual sin in an appropriate way when there are both men and women in the group? Pause this audio here.

Paul asks a question but does not expect an answer. Paul asks, "Shouldn't you have gone into mourning, or been sad about what the man did?" Paul asks questions like this, which do not need an answer, to emphasize something that the Corinthian believers should already know. Here Paul is asking the question because the Corinthian believers should have been sad about what was happening. The Corinthian believers should have disciplined, or punished, the man.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when you were reminding people of something they should already know. How did you make it clear to them that they should have remembered the right thing to do? Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers that he is not with them physically, but he is with them "in spirit." This means that he would like to be with them, and he is thinking about them and wants to support them.

Stop here and discuss the following as a group: Talk about a time you really wanted to be with a group of people, but you could not be physically present with them. How do you tell them that you wish you were there, and that you think about them often? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that he has already passed judgment on the man guilty of this sexual immorality. This means that Paul has already decided what must happen to this man.

Paul says that when the Corinthian believers come together, the power of the Lord Jesus is present. Paul is saying that when the believers come together and punish this man for his immoral behavior, Jesus' Spirit is there and Jesus gives the church authority to make good and fair judgments.

Paul says that the man must be "handed over to Satan so that his flesh, or worldly desires, will be destroyed." Satan is ruler of this world, outside the church, until Jesus comes back to judge everyone. God is the ruler in the church, even now. Paul is not saying that the Corinthian believers should literally give the man to Satan. Paul is saying that the Corinthian believers must send this man away from the church. When the man is no longer part

of the church community, he will experience what unbelievers experience. Paul hopes that these bad experiences will make the man one day turn away from his sins and turn back to following Jesus. Then Jesus will save the man on the Day of the Lord Jesus, or the day when Jesus comes back to judge everyone on the earth.

Stop here and remember the story you told in the previous step about sending someone away from your church community. How did you talk about sending that person away? How will you talk about giving this sexually immoral man to Satan? Pause this audio here.

In the second part, Paul has to talk to the Corinthian believers about being puffed up and arrogant. This is another place where Paul asks a question and does not expect an answer. The question he asks is, "Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough?" Paul is emphasizing again that the Corinthians already knew this information. This time, their pride has allowed this sin of sexual immorality to continue in the church, and they run the risk that this man's sin will affect the whole church like leaven spreads through bread dough. The Corinthian believers must get rid of the sin in their community. In other words, they must put out the man guilty of sexual immorality from their fellowship. Paul describes the sin as if it were leaven, which is like yeast and makes dough rise. Leaven is fermented dough that helps new dough ferment and rise. Just a little bit can affect the whole batch. This is why the Bible often uses leaven as a picture for sin, which can spread through a group of people and make them spiritually sick.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Remember in the previous step you told a story of when something bad was happening in a small part of your family or community, and then it spread until the whole family or community was affected. This is like the leaven spreading through the dough. What words and phrases will you use to talk about the leaven and the dough? Pause this audio here.

Paul goes on to tell the Corinthian believers that if they put the man who is guilty of sexual immorality out of the church, then the church community will be clean and pure again, as if they were a new batch of fresh dough with no leaven. Paul is reminding the believers of the Jewish festival of Unleavened Bread, when the Jewish people "keep or celebrate the festival" by throwing out all the old leaven from their bread dough. Paul is saying that like they throw out that leaven, they should throw out the people who are sinning so that the church can be clean like new dough. When the church is clean again, the believers can be truly joyful again, just like someone is joyful when they celebrate a festival. The believers are joyful because they have "sincerity, or purity, and truth." People who are pure and truthful are people who say what they think in their heart and who speak the truth. Other people can trust them.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about people you know who say what they think in their heart and who speak the truth. What kinds of things do they do and say? How do you talk about these people—what words and phrases do you use to describe them? Pause this audio here.

In the third part, Paul returns to something he has already said to the Corinthian believers, probably in an earlier letter that we do not have. Previously, Paul had said that the Corinthian believers were not to be friends with any sexually immoral people. Now Paul makes it clear that he did not mean that they should have no contact with sexually immoral people or other people who are greedy for money, who cheat people, and who worship other gods besides the one true God. That would be impossible because the world is full of people who do not follow God. What Paul does mean is that the Corinthian believers should have nothing to do with a person who is deliberately sinning, but who also says they are a believer who follows God. Paul gives a list of these kinds of people. It includes sexually immoral people, and people who are greedy and want more than they need, swindlers who cheat other people, idolaters who worship objects or images as idols, slanderers who say untrue things about other people, and drunkards who often drink too much alcohol. These are all people who, as part of a Christian community of believers, will hurt the whole community with their sinful behaviors. Paul says the believers should not even eat with other believers who sin like this!

Paul finishes this part of his letter with two questions that he does not expect the Corinthians to answer. Paul asks whether he should judge those outside the church, and whether the Corinthian believers should be judging those in the church. Paul asks questions like this, which do not need an answer, to emphasize something that the Corinthian believers should already know. In this passage, Paul is saying that it is important that Paul should not be judging those outside the church, and that Christian believers are meant to judge those in the church.

In a previous passage, Paul has told the Corinthian believers that they are not to judge. In this passage, Paul is telling the Corinthian believers they need to judge people inside the church. Paul is talking about different kinds of judgment. In an earlier passage, Paul tells the Corinthian believers not to judge him or Apollos. Paul is telling the believers not to judge the intentions or the value of what Paul and Apollos do. Jesus will judge them when he comes back on the Day of the Lord. Now, Paul tells the Corinthian believers to judge and punish people in the church who are deliberately sinning. This is important because it keeps the church community pure and strong. By seeing and punishing sin in the church, the believers are helping each other follow God's laws.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about the two different types of judgment. In a previous part of the letter, Paul tells the believers not to judge or criticize Paul's motives. Here, however, Paul tells the believers that if someone continues to openly decide to sin against God, the believers should punish them by throwing them out of the church community. How will you talk about these different situations? Pause this audio here.

Paul finishes this part of his letter by making a statement that God will judge, or decide the guilt and innocence of, the people who are outside the church. Paul then repeats a saying from the Old Testament which says again what he said earlier, that the believers must put the wicked, or evil, person out of the church community.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to have drawings or objects to represent all the characters in this story. As you retell the story, remember that the whole of this passage is Paul talking to the Corinthian believers about the man who is guilty of sexual immorality and their reaction to it. Paul is also saying that when the Corinthian believers see that there is sin in the church, they must take action and get rid of it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has 4 parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers
- The man guilty of sexual immorality
- The man's stepmother
- The Lord Jesus Christ
- Satan
- All the sinners who are outside the church
- The Corinthian believers who are deliberately sinning
- And God

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers that somebody has told him that there is a man in the church who has sinned and continues to sin by having sexual relations with his stepmother. Paul says that the Corinthian believers are puffed up and arrogant because this behavior does not make them sad, and they have not disciplined the man. You could have Corinthian believers standing in one part of the room, and Paul standing in another. The man who is guilty of sexual sin could be standing with his stepmother and all the other believers since he is still part of the church.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the man guilty of sexual sin, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am angry that somebody has told Paul about what I am doing, and that he is telling the whole church about me," or
- "I do not care what Paul says, I am enjoying what I'm doing. I do not want to stop."

Even though Paul cannot be with the Corinthian believers in person, he is thinking about them and about this situation, and he has already decided what needs to be done about the sexually immoral man. So when the Corinthian believers meet together under the authority of Jesus, and even though Paul cannot be with them in person, he is giving them permission and his authority as an apostle to punish this man for the man's immoral behavior. Paul says that the man must be "handed over to Satan," or put away from the church, with the hope that he will be spiritually restored on the day when the Lord Jesus comes to judge everyone. Remember, this is not actually happening. This is what Paul is telling the Corinthian believers to do. When you are acting out this part, you are acting out what Paul wanted to happen, not what was actually happening. You could have the man who is guilty of sexual sin try to hide from the other believers and from Paul. Then the believers could make the man stand separately from the group.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am sad that the Corinthian believers have allowed this man to continue in his sin. They can not see that they are hurting the whole church," or
- "I wish I could be with the Corinthian believers myself. I have told them what they need to do, but they do not always pay attention to what I am saying."

Ask the person playing the stepmother, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am frightened, I do not know what is going to happen to me now. Will I still have a place in the community?" or
- "I am ashamed. Now everybody knows what I have been doing. Will my family still accept me?"

Once again, Paul has to talk to the Corinthian believers about being puffed up, or arrogant. This time, their pride has allowed this sin of sexual immorality to continue in the church, and they risk that they will make the whole church contaminated or infected by the sin. The Corinthian believers must get rid of the sin in their community.

Paul describes the sin as if it were leaven, which is like yeast and makes dough rise. Just a bit of leaven can affect the whole batch.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers that if they put the man who is guilty of sexual immorality out of the church, then the church community will be clean and pure again, as if they were a new batch of fresh dough. Paul says that as they are believers, they are already holy. Paul explains this by referring to the Jewish Passover festival which celebrated the deliverance of the people of God from their slavery in Egypt. Paul says that the believers should "keep the feast" by always being like the unleavened batch of fresh dough, pure and true.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "This is the first time I have understood that sin can affect the whole community, not just the person who is thinking or doing the bad things," or
- "Paul often says that we are 'puffed up.' I am glad that I understand this now. I see that I need to change the way I think and act."

Previously, Paul had said that the Corinthian believers were not to mix with any sexually immoral people. Now he makes it clear that he did not mean that they should have no contact with the sexually immoral, or a number of other types of sinners that he lists. That would be impossible because then they could not be in the world at all. What he does mean is that the Corinthian believers should have nothing to do with a person who is deliberately sinning, but who also says they are a believer. Remember, this is not actually happening. This is what Paul is telling the Corinthian believers to do. When you are acting out this part, you are acting out what Paul wanted to happen, not what was actually happening. You could have some believers "find" the believers who are also deliberately sinning and put them to stand apart from the group.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I do not like telling my friends that I know they are deliberately sinning and that they can not be part of the church anymore," or
- "I do not want this to happen to me. I need Jesus to show me if there are things in my life that I need to change."

Paul asks whether he should judge those outside the church, and whether the Corinthian believers should be judging those in the church. In this passage, it is important that Paul should not be judging those outside the church. It is also important that Christian believers are meant to judge those in the church.

Paul says again that the wicked person must be cast out of the community.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul has heard there is a man in the church who has sinned, and is continuing to sin by having sexual intercourse with his stepmother. This is sexual **immorality**. Sexual immorality means doing sexual things that go against certain moral, cultural, or religious rules.

Stop here and discuss as a group what culturally appropriate words or phrases you will use for **sexual immorality**, specifically the sexual relationship that Paul describes here. Look up immorality in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the sexual immorality that is happening is so bad that not even the **pagans** allow it. Pagans in this passage means anybody who does not follow the true God.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **pagans**. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the Corinthian believers are **puffed up** and **arrogant**. Use the same word or phrase for puffed up that you have used in previous passages.

Paul says that the man who is guilty of sexual immorality must be **put out of fellowship**. This means that he must be excluded from the church community. Sometimes this would mean that the person would remain as part of the church community but would not be able to share in the Lord's supper. At other times, and in this passage, it would mean that the person could no longer meet with other believers.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for "put out of fellowship." Look up fellowship in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Paul also says that the believers must "hand the man over to **Satan** so that Satan can **destroy his flesh**, or worldly desires." Satan is a spirit being who is the leader of all evil spirits. Satan is the enemy of God, and Satan tempts people to disobey God. Paul hopes that the bad things that happen to the man, or the destruction of his flesh, will make the man one day turn away from his sins and turn back to following Jesus.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for "hand over to Satan so that Satan can destroy his flesh, or worldly desires." Look up Satan in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that after Satan destroys the man's flesh, Jesus will **save** the man on the **Day of the Lord**, or the day when Jesus will come back to decide the guilt or innocence of everyone. This day is also called just "The Day," or "the appointed time" in other parts of Paul's letter. Use the same word for save as you have used in previous passages, and see salvation in the Master Glossary for more information if needed.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **Day of the Lord**. Look up Lord in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that he is with the Corinthian believers in **spirit**. This means that he would like to be with them. Paul is thinking about them and is wanting to support them.

Stop here and discuss what words and phrases you use when you are saying that you would like to be with somebody, but you can't be physically present with them. Look up spirit of a person in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that he has passed **judgment** on the man guilty of sexual sin. Later in the passage, Paul says that Paul is not to **judge** people outside the church, it is for God to judge them. Paul says the Corinthian believers must judge those in the church. In a previous passage, Paul has told the Corinthian believers that they are not to judge. Paul is talking about different kinds of judgment. In an earlier passage, Paul tells the Corinthian believers not to judge the intentions or the value of what Paul and Apollos do. In this passage, Paul tells the Corinthian believers to judge in the sense of deciding the guilt or innocence of people in the church who are deliberately sinning. Then the church can punish or discipline the believers who are sinning. This is important because it keeps the church community pure and strong. By seeing and dealing with sin in the church, they are helping each other live according to Christian values.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for the different meanings of **judge**. In this case, Paul is talking about deciding if someone is guilty or innocent. The word for judge that you use in this passage may be different to the words you have used in the earlier passage. Pause this audio here.

Paul also talks about **Christ**, the Passover lamb. Use the same word for Jesus Christ you have used in previous passages. Look up Christ in the Master Glossary for more information.

Paul describes sin in the church as if it were **leaven**. Leaven is fermented dough that helps new dough ferment and rise. In Paul's time, people saved some leavened dough to mix with the new dough each week. Just a bit of leaven can affect the whole batch. This is why the Bible often uses leaven as a picture for sin, which can spread through a group of people and make them spiritually sick.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **leaven**. Look at a photo of leaven and of bread that has risen because of leaven again if needed. Pause this audio here.

Paul describes Jesus as Christ, our **Passover lamb**. During the first Passover, the Israelites killed a lamb and put its blood on the doorposts of their houses to protect the family's first born son from death in Egypt. This was when the Israelites escaped from slavery in Egypt. In the same way, Jesus is called the Passover Lamb because his death and resurrection saves people from sin and spiritual death.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Passover lamb**. Look up Passover in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul had said in a previous letter that the Corinthian believers were not to mix with any **sexually immoral** people, or people who are **greedy, swindlers, or idolaters**. Now Paul says that the Corinthian believers should have nothing to do with a person who is deliberately sinning, but who also says they are a believer. As well as those already listed, Paul now includes **slanderers** and **drunkards**. Greedy people are people who always want more of something, like money or food. They are not satisfied with what they need. Swindlers are people who cheat other people to get money or things dishonestly. Idolaters are people who worship objects or images as idols rather than the one true God. Slanderers are people who say untrue things about other people to make other people think bad things about them. Drunkards are people who often drink too much alcohol.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **greedy people, swindlers, idolaters, slanderers, and drunkards**. For more information on idolaters, see the Master Glossary for idol. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul quotes from the Old Testament and says again that the **church** should throw the **wicked**, or evil person, out of the church community. Use the same word for church that you have used in previous passages, and see church in the Master Glossary for more information.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **wicked**. For more information, see wickedness in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 6:1-11

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Recall an important point from the previous part of Paul's letter. Paul had reminded the Corinthian believers that they should decide who is guilty or innocent among believers within the church. He said God will judge people who are not part of the church. Paul reminded the believers of an important truth. The believers are God's people, so they should act in a way that shows that they are part of God's kingdom.

In this passage of Paul's letter, he talks about how believers should handle disagreements with each other. Paul tells believers to solve disagreements or arguments with each other in a kind way to show the world a different way to handle fights. Paul says it is better to allow someone to do something wrong to you than to make the church look bad.

Stop here and discuss these questions as a group: How can we make our church community a place where people work together to solve their problems? What qualities should we look for in people who help solve conflicts? Pause this audio here.

You will remember that Rome ruled the area around Corinth, so some people in the church were taking their disagreements about everyday matters like property or possessions to Roman courts. Believers were not solving these problems within the church. Paul is very angry with the Corinthian believers. Paul asks the Corinthians if they dare to take their lawsuits, or disagreements with each other, to ungodly or unbelieving judges instead of bringing them to other believers. Paul reminds the Corinthians about what it means to be part of the Lord God's special people, or saints. The Corinthians know from Jewish Scripture that in the future when Jesus comes back to judge the world, God's people, or saints, will also judge everyone in the world, including the angels. God's people, along with Jesus, will decide who is guilty and who is innocent. This will be a difficult job. If God is going to give believers this difficult job later, they should be able to solve small, or trivial, problems now.

Jewish prophets wrote that God's people would one day judge everyone in the world, but Paul does not explain exactly how this will happen. However, the future is very real and important. What will happen in the future should give believers the confidence and desire to begin living in a good way even now.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about some important responsibility that you know you will have in the future, like becoming a parent or getting married. How does that future responsibility change how you behave now? Pause this audio here.

The Corinthians did not understand how important the future is for believers. This made them make bad choices about solving problems among themselves.

Paul seems shocked that there does not seem to be anyone wise enough in the church to judge between believers, and he asks if it is possible that the church does not have a wise person to help solve problems between church members. Paul is not really asking a question. Paul is making a point. Paul thinks there are wise people in the church who should be able to help its members solve its own problems. Instead, one believer takes another believer publicly to an outside, Roman court with judges who don't follow God's ways.

Stop here and discuss these questions as a group: Talk about what happens when a person in your culture takes another person to court to solve a problem between the two people. What does the judge do? How do the two people in court act with each other? Now talk about how church members in your culture solve problems among themselves. How is it different from the way nonbelievers solve problems among themselves? Pause this audio here.

Paul is so disappointed in the believers that he says they have failed completely to do what God wants them to do. Instead of taking each other to court, they should accept that sometimes other believers do wrong things to them and they lose property or possessions. It is better to accept a loss than to publicly take another believer to court so that nonbelievers see the bad things believers do to each other! But instead of accepting loss, believers are actually cheating and doing wrong to their brothers, the other believers!

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a time when a believer did not take another believer to a public court so that the problem would not be public among nonbelievers. How did it feel to accept a loss or not take a wrongdoer to court? How did the believers solve the problem among themselves instead? Was this an easy thing for the believers to do? Pause this audio here.

Paul again reminds the believers that they are God's people and therefore they are part of God's kingdom, where God is the good ruler. God will not allow unrighteous people, or people who do not follow God, to be a part of his kingdom. Paul wants to make sure the Corinthians understand this. He asks them if they know this truth. Paul thinks the Corinthians should already know this.

Paul is telling the Corinthians to be careful. He does not want them to think they follow God but act in such a way that they might not get, or inherit, God's kingdom either. Paul lists sins that the Corinthian believers used to do. Paul lists sexual sins, worshiping idols instead of the one true God, committing adultery, having sex with people of the same sex, stealing, being greedy, getting drunk all the time, saying bad things about each other, and cheating people. He wants the Corinthians to understand how serious these sins are. But Paul reminds them that they are not like this anymore! God has changed their lives completely! The believers follow Jesus as their Lord, or master. That means that the Lord Jesus Christ's power, God's Spirit, washed the believers like a person washes with water to become pure, or clean, from all these sins. They became holy, or set apart as God's special people. They became righteous, or in a right relationship with God.

Paul wants believers to treat each other with respect and love because the Lord Jesus Christ has changed them, and someday they will judge everyone alongside Christ. Paul encourages the Corinthians to behave in a way that shows how Jesus has changed them.

Stop here and discuss these questions as a group: Paul says God changed the Corinthian believers. Tell a story about someone in your community who changed when they started to follow Jesus. How did that person change? How did the community react when they saw the change in the new believer?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 6:1–11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul is not happy with the believers in Corinth. The believers are taking their disagreements to non-Christian courts. Paul says this is wrong. He tells the believers they should settle problems among themselves. Paul reminds the believers that they will judge the world and angels in the future. Therefore, the believers should be able to judge small matters now.

In the second part: Paul warns the believers that they have completely failed. He lists several types of people who will not inherit God's kingdom. Paul reminds the believers that some of them used to be like this. But now they are washed, made holy, and made right with God through Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers
- Unbelievers
- God
- Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit

In the first part of this story, Paul talks about a problem in the Corinth church. Some believers are taking other believers to court. People who do not follow God's laws judge in these courts. This makes Paul angry. He asks why they do this to show them how angry he is. Paul says believers should fix disagreements with each other in the church.

Stop here and discuss as a group: When you are really angry about something wrong that people are doing, how do you tell them that what they are doing is wrong? How will you show that Paul is angry when he asks them why they go to outside courts to solve their problems among believers? Pause this audio here.

Paul asks the believers if they realize that at the end of the world they will make decisions about people in the world and the angels. Believers will decide if unbelievers and angels are guilty or innocent of wrongdoing. If they will do that, Paul asks them if they should be able to judge in small problems now among themselves? Paul is not expecting the Corinthian believers to answer these questions. Instead, Paul wants them to think about these questions and realize that they do not need to go to outside judges, because they already know how to make good decisions.

Stop here and talk about this: How will you talk about judging, or deciding who is guilty and who is innocent, both now and in the future? Think about a judge in your culture who decides who has done the wrong thing, and how to punish them. How do you describe what these judges do? Pause this audio here.

When Paul talked about this, he used words that show this will really happen in the future.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How would you talk about something that will really happen in the future in your language? How would you explain the idea of judging the world and angels? Pause this audio here.

Paul says the believers should pick judges from their church. Paul now shames the Corinthians. Again, Paul uses questions to show the Corinthians that they do not even use the wisdom that they think they have! He uses the questions to criticize the believers for their lack of wisdom. This is surprising because the Corinthians were proud of what they thought was their own wisdom. However, they do not take advantage of their own wisdom by making decisions about small lawsuits themselves. Paul says that surely the Corinthians can find a wise enough person in the church to be a good judge. A judge in the church would be better than an outside judge who does not believe in Jesus and does not follow the same laws of God that people in the church follow.

Stop here and discuss as a group: These outside judges are people that believers should reject and despise as judges because they do not follow God's laws. The believers do not even respect these outside judges. How will you say that Paul asks why the believers ask for a judgment from judges who people despise and reject in the church? Pause this audio here.

In the second part of this passage, Paul says that the people in the church are already defeated. The Corinthian believers have totally failed to live like God's people because they have lawsuits and the believers take each other to court. Paul says that sometimes there are situations where believers have two choices. Believers may choose to accept loss of property or possessions. Or believers may choose to take another believer to an outside court. When these are the only two choices, Paul says the believers should accept the loss. Paul seems to think that the believers should know already that they should accept loss because he asks them this as a question, "Why would you not accept loss? Why would you not accept someone cheating you?" Then Paul gives a strong contrast. Paul says that instead of accepting loss, the believers are cheating each other! Paul warns the believers about doing bad things. Paul says, "Do not be deceived." This means "Stop believing lies."

Stop here and discuss this as a group: Paul is trying to convince the Corinthian believers to change their way of thinking, and to be willing to accept another believer doing something wrong to them without taking them to an outside court. Paul tries to convince them using questions. How will you show that Paul is trying to convince them to change how they normally think? Pause this audio here.

Paul reminds them that people who do wrong will not inherit, or get to be part of, God's kingdom. Paul lists examples of these people. They include people who do bad sexual things, people who worship false gods, and people who cheat on their husband or wife. They also include people who steal, people who always want more things, and people who drink too much. They also include people who say mean things about others, and people who trick others.

Stop here and discuss as a group: People who inherit God's kingdom are believers that God has promised that they can be in his kingdom when he rules completely. God already rules in the hearts of believers, but someday he will rule in a perfect kingdom. God promises that we will rule with him there. How would you talk about inheriting or getting God's kingdom in your language? Pause this audio here.

Paul then reminds the believers how their lives have changed. He says, "Some of you used to be like this." This shows that some believers used to do these bad things. Now these believers are different. Paul says they are clean or free from sin. Paul also says they are holy or set apart as God's people. Paul also says they are in a right relationship with God. These believers are different because of Jesus Christ and God's Spirit.

Paul uses three important words here: one for "clean," one for "holy," and one for "right with God."

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do people in your culture act when they are clean from sin, holy, and right with God? Act out what it might look like to be clean, holy, and right with God. How would you describe what you're doing? Pause this audio here.

This part of the passage shows how God can change people's lives. This part reminds believers that they should live differently now that they believe in Jesus.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. You might want to have drawings, objects, or even people representing Paul, the believers, and the judges. You could split the group into two parts. One part could act out believers taking their problems to non-Christian courts. The other part could show believers settling problems among themselves. Then, you could have someone represent Paul writing his letter and explaining why the believers' actions are wrong. Finally, you could show the contrast between the old life of sin and the new life in Christ.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers
- Unbelievers
- God
- Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "If you have a disagreement with another believer, why take it to non-believers to decide instead of to other Christians?"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul: "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer:

- "I am frustrated that believers are taking their problems to unbelievers because then the unbelievers will see the problems in the church," or
- "I want the believers to solve their issues within the church," or
- "I am worried that the believers do not trust each other to make fair judgments."

Paul says, "Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial, or unimportant, cases?"

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the believers: "What are you feeling or thinking?" The believers might answer things like:

- "I didn't realize we would judge the world one day," or
- "I feel ashamed for not trusting my fellow believers to judge my case," or
- "I want to learn how to handle problems and arguments within our community better."

Paul says, "Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more can we judge the things of this life!"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul: "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer:

- "I want to remind the believers of their important role in God's plan," or
- "I hope this will encourage them to judge their own disputes," or
- "I'm trying to show them how God thinks they are capable to judge their own arguments."

Ask the people playing the believers: "What are you feeling or thinking?" They might answer things like:

- "I feel amazed that we will judge angels," or
- "I understand now that we should be able to handle our own problems," or
- "I want to learn more about our role in God's plan."

Paul then talks about the wrongdoers who will not inherit the kingdom of God. He lists many types of sinful behavior. Paul reminds the believers that some of them used to do these things. But now they are washed, made holy, and made right with God through Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul: "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer:

- "I want to remind them of how God has changed their lives," or
- "I hope they understand the importance of living differently now," or
- "I'm trying to encourage them to act in a way that reflects their new life in Christ."

Ask the people playing the believers: "What are you feeling or thinking?" They might answer things like:

- "I feel grateful for how God has changed me," or
- "I want to live differently now that I have a new life God has given me," or
- "I understand now that I should act differently from my old ways."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

In this passage, Paul addresses a specific problem. **Saints**, or God's people, are taking each other to court before **unrighteous judges**. Unrighteous people do not follow Jesus or have a relationship with him. Judges are official people who decide if someone is innocent or guilty of doing something wrong. Use the same words for saints as you have used in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for more information about saints if needed.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **unrighteous judges**. You have used a word for righteous in previous passages in 1 Corinthians, so unrighteous is someone who is not righteous. See the Master Glossary for more information about righteousness and about judge. Pause this audio here.

Paul talks about **lawsuits**, or **disagreements**, about everyday matters. In Corinth, the legal court system was an important part of life in society, and public lawsuits were common to settle disagreements about everyday things like property or possessions.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **lawsuits**, or **disagreements**. Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the believers that they will judge the world and judge **angels**. Angels are spiritual beings created by God. They often serve as his messengers. Use the same word for angels that you have used in previous passages. For more information on angels, refer to the Master Glossary.

Paul mentions that believers are taking their disagreements to judges who people in the **church** scorn, or do not respect. Use the same word for church as you have used in previous passages, and refer to church in the Master Glossary for more information.

Paul contrasts **believers**, whom he calls **brothers**, with "the ungodly" or "unbelievers." **Unbelievers** would include people who worshiped pagan gods or followed popular philosophies of the time. These are people who do not believe in Jesus. Unbelievers are the same people as the unrighteous judges in the earlier part of this passage. Use the same word or phrase for brothers and sisters, or other believers, as you have used in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word you will use for **unbelievers**. For more information, you may refer to believer in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Paul lists some types of people who will not inherit **God's kingdom**. When you inherit, you receive a thing from someone else, or you receive a right to do something from someone else. So here, this means that people who sin cannot receive the right to live in God's kingdom. Use the same word or phrase for God's kingdom that you have used in previous passages, and remember that kingdom of God is in the Master Glossary.

The **sexually immoral, idolaters, greedy people, drunkards, slanderers, and swindlers** were all mentioned in the previous passage. Use the same words for these sins that you have used in previous passages, and remember that immorality and idol are in the Master Glossary.

Adulterers are married people who have sexual relationships with someone who is not their husband or wife. **Men who have sex with men** refer to men who do sexual activities with other men. **Thieves** are people who take things that do not belong to them without permission.

Stop here and discuss as a group how to talk about **adulterers, men who have sex with other men, and thieves**. For more information on adultery, see the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

The passage mentions that the Corinthian believers are "washed or made clean," "sanctified or made holy," and "justified or made righteous." When God washes someone, he makes them pure from sin. When God sanctifies them, he makes them holy or sets them apart for a special purpose. When God justifies them, God declares them righteous, just like a judge declares a person innocent of wrongdoing.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will talk about being **washed**, **sanctified**, and **justified**. For more information, see sanctification and justify in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

The phrase "in the name of the **Lord** Jesus **Christ**" means that the believers now have the authority and power of Jesus. For more information on Lord and Christ, refer to the Master Glossary and use the same words or phrases as you used in previous passages.

The "Spirit of our God" refers to the **Holy Spirit**. The concept of God's Spirit was familiar from Jewish Scriptures, but now the believers realize that God's Spirit is the active presence of God in believers' lives. Use the same word or phrase for the Holy Spirit or Spirit of God as you used in previous passages. For more information on the Holy Spirit, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 6:1-11

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (19014095 KB)

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1 Corinthians 6:12–20

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 6:12–20 and put it in your hearts.

Before you have any group discussions for this passage, stop and decide as a group how you prefer to talk about it. This passage talks about the sexual immorality between people and prostitutes. In your culture, what is the best way to talk about these things? Would it be good to divide into groups of men and women for this conversion? Do you want to work in a different way than you do in other sections? Pause this audio here.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 6:12–20 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 6:12–20 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the last part of his letter, Paul taught the Corinthians how to solve arguments between believers inside the church. Now Paul writes about a new problem someone has told him about. Some believers in Corinth are involved in sexual immorality. These believers do not understand what it means to be free in Christ.

In this section of the letter, Paul explains how believers should use their bodies. Some people in Corinth say, "Everything is allowed for me—I can do anything I want." Paul tells them this is not true. Not everything that we can do is good for us. Paul warns the Corinthians not to let anything control them.

Paul explains that God made food to go into the stomach. God made the stomach to receive food. But our bodies are different. God did not make our bodies to do sexual sins, or immorality. God made our bodies to serve the Lord Jesus. The Lord provides for our bodies. Paul reminds the Corinthians that God raised Jesus from the dead and will also raise us from the dead.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do you think Paul means when he says not everything that is allowed is good for us? Tell about a time when someone did something that was not wrong, but even so, it was not good for them or did not benefit them. Pause this audio here.

The people of Corinth lived in a culture with different views about sex and marriage. Many Greek teachers said having sex with someone you weren't married to was acceptable. They taught that this behavior was fine as long as a person stayed in control of their desires. Young Greek men often went to slaves or prostitutes for sex. Prostitutes were men or women who sold sexual relations for money. The laws in Corinth made prostitution legal. These laws only stopped sex between two people who were not married to each other if they were from the highest social class.

Paul knows and understands these common beliefs in Corinth. This helps him teach God's truth in ways that make sense to the Corinthians. When they say, "I am allowed to do anything," Paul responds with wisdom. He shows them that something can be legal but still be harmful. Paul teaches the Corinthians that God owns their bodies.

Paul teaches that our bodies are like limbs, or parts of Christ's body. He asks if we should join parts of Christ's body to a prostitute. Paul strongly says this must not happen. He explains that a man who joins with a prostitute becomes one body with her because when two people have sex, they become like one body together. When Christians give their lives to Jesus, it is like they become part of Jesus's body. If a Christian joins their body with someone who doesn't follow Jesus, they are mixing Jesus's body with someone who doesn't belong to Jesus. This is why Paul says Christians should not have sex with prostitutes or anyone they are not married to. God wants Christians to keep their bodies pure because they belong to Jesus's body. When we join our bodies with someone else through sex, it is not just a physical act. It creates a deep connection that matters to God because believers are joined with Jesus in spirit, or in their thoughts and actions, even though Jesus is not physically present with us. For this reason, Paul gives a strong warning about sexual sin. Paul says to run away from sexual sin as fast as they can! Sexual sin damages our bodies differently than other sins do.

Stop here and give an example of a time when you or someone you know was joined with someone else in spirit, or joined together in thoughts and actions. How did you know these two people were united in spirit? Pause this audio here.

To help the Corinthians understand this, Paul uses something they see every day, temples. In Corinth, temples were sacred buildings used only for worship. Paul tells them their bodies work the same way. God's Holy Spirit makes His home in the bodies of believers. This makes each believer's body as special as a temple.

God bought believers by paying the greatest price possible. Jesus died on the cross to purchase them for God. Now believers' bodies belong fully to God. The Holy Spirit lives inside each believer's body. Because God owns believers and lives within them, believers should use their bodies in ways that show honor to God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Paul says God made our physical bodies to serve the Lord Jesus. How does this affect how we live our daily lives? Pause this audio here.

The Corinthians think that what they do with their bodies does not matter. They believe God will destroy their bodies anyway. But Paul says this is not true. He teaches that our bodies are important to God, who will raise them from the dead. This means what we do with our bodies now is important.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Describe how you or someone you know uses your physical body for the Lord Jesus. Describe how you might use your physical body badly. Pause this audio here.

Paul wants the Corinthians to understand that their freedom in Christ does not mean they can do whatever they want. They should use their freedom to honor God. Paul teaches that our bodies are connected to Christ, so we should not join our bodies to things that do not also belong to God.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 6:12–20 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has 3 parts.

In the first part: Paul talks about freedom. Paul says that Christians are free to do many things, but not everything is good for them. Paul tells the Corinthians not to let anything control them.

In the second part: Paul explains that the body is important to God. The body is not meant for sexual sin. The body is meant for the Lord Jesus, and God will raise our bodies from the dead. Paul explains that our bodies are parts of Christ's body.

In the third part: Paul tells the Corinthians to run away from sexual sin. Sexual sin hurts our own bodies. Our bodies are temples where God's Spirit lives. God bought us for a price. We should use our bodies to honor God.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers
- A prostitute
- God
- Lord Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit

Some of the Corinthians think they can do anything they want. They think what they do with their bodies does not matter. The Corinthians keep saying, "Everything is permissible for me." They say this because they believe they have the right to do anything. Paul wants to correct this wrong thinking.

Paul explains that what people do with their bodies is very important to God. When the Corinthians first say, "Everything is permissible for me," Paul responds by saying, "but not everything is beneficial." The word Paul uses for "beneficial" means to bring good to someone. This shows that the Corinthians need to think about whether their actions help or hurt themselves and others. When the Corinthians say, "Everything is permissible for me" a second time, Paul responds by saying, "but I will not be mastered by anything."

Paul does not fully reject what the Corinthians are saying. There is freedom in Christ. But this freedom has limits. Not all actions are good for the church or for an individual. Paul agrees that Christians have freedom, but Paul teaches that Christians need wisdom to use this freedom well. Christians should think about whether their actions bring good to themselves and to others. Christians should also be careful that nothing controls them. Paul warns that a person who tries to do everything that is allowed might become a slave to that way of living.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when someone kept strongly believing they had the right to do whatever they wanted, even when others tried to tell them there should be limits. What words or phrases would you use in your language to describe that kind of strong belief about having complete freedom to do anything? Pause this audio here.

Paul shows us two different sets of things. First, Paul talks about food and the stomach. Food goes into the stomach. The stomach takes in the food. God will destroy both the stomach and the food. They will not exist when God brings us back to life.

Next, Paul talks about our bodies and the Lord Jesus. God made our physical bodies to serve the Lord. The Lord provides for our physical bodies. This is different from food and the stomach. God will not destroy our bodies or the Lord Jesus. Instead, God raised the Lord from death. God will also raise our bodies from death.

Paul says our bodies are joined to Christ. Paul uses a word for "joined" that makes the Corinthians think about glue. When someone glues two things together, these things become one object. The glued things cannot come apart. Paul wants the Corinthians to understand that joining has this same strong meaning. This shows how close our connection to Christ is.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What words do people in your culture use when they talk about things that join together and cannot separate? Share examples from your language of how you describe two things becoming permanently one. Pause this audio here.

Paul believes that when someone has sex with a prostitute, more than just physical joining happens. There is also a spiritual connection. This goes against the spiritual union believers have with Christ. Paul asks two strong questions to make his point clear. In the first question, Paul reminds the Corinthians that their bodies belong to Christ. Paul uses the word "members," which means their bodies are actual parts of Christ's own body. Then Paul asks if he should take these parts of Christ's body and join them with a prostitute.

Paul answers his own question with the strongest possible "No" in the original language. The word Paul uses means "May it never be!" or "Absolutely not!" This is not a quiet or polite "no." This is like someone shouting "No!" as loud as they can. Paul wants the Corinthians to understand how completely wrong this idea is. The Corinthians should feel shocked that anyone would even suggest joining Christ's own body parts with a prostitute.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, what words do you use when you want to show complete shock or total rejection of an idea? How do people in your culture express "No!" in the strongest possible way when they hear something that should never happen? Pause this audio here.

Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that someone wrote in Scripture that when two people join themselves together, they are one body. Now Paul says that in the same way, when people follow the Lord Jesus, they are one spiritual body with him. This is why the next part of Paul's letter is so important! Paul reminds the believers that Scripture teaches them this by saying, "It is written." This was a way that Paul told people that what he was about to say came directly from the Jewish Scriptures.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you make it clear that Paul is about to quote from Scripture when he says, "When two people join themselves together, they become one body"? Pause this audio here.

In the third part of this section of Paul's letter, Paul strongly tells the Corinthians to run away from sexual sin. Sexual sin refers to all kinds of wrong sexual acts. Paul says sexual sin is different from other sins. It involves joining one's body with someone else in the wrong way. This can harm a person's spiritual life.

Paul asks the Corinthians, "Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?" He reminds them that their physical bodies are like temples. A temple is the special place where God lives. The Holy Spirit lives in each believer's body. This truth is not just about the whole church as a group. The Holy Spirit lives in each individual Christian's body.

Paul reminds the Corinthians that God bought them. Paul wants the Corinthians to think about buying something in a market. When you buy something, that thing belongs to you, and you are responsible for it. Believers belong to God. Believers serve God. God is responsible for their well-being. Because of this, believers should use their bodies to honor God, or to show how great God is.

These ideas were new to the Corinthians. Many Greek people thought the body was not important. They believed only the inner part of a person mattered for eternal life. But Paul teaches that the body matters very much to God. Our bodies belong to God because Jesus died and rose again. Our bodies are important because God's Spirit lives in us.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 6:12–20 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Normally, in this step, the group will dramatize the passage. But because this passage talks about sexual immorality, it may be difficult to do that in the same way you have before. The main purpose of this activity is to feel it deeply and talk about your feelings about the passage. How do you want to do that for this passage, in a way that honors Christ and is appropriate in your culture?

Pause this audio here to discuss how you want to go forward.

If you decide to go forward with the dramatization, here is the information you need.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers
- A prostitute
- God
- Lord Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "I am allowed to do anything, but not everything is good for me. I am allowed to do anything, but I will not let anything control me. Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food. But God will destroy both of them. The body is not for wrong use. The body is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. God raised the Lord from death. God will also raise us by his power."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want the Corinthians to understand that freedom in Christ does not mean they can do whatever they want," or
- "I am sad that they are slaves to sexual immorality. I need to explain that what we do with our bodies matters to God," or
- "I am trying to help them see that our bodies are important and will be raised, just like Jesus was raised."

Ask a person playing one of the believers listening, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am confused. I thought we were free to do anything in Christ," or
- "I never thought about my body being for the Lord before," or
- "I wonder what Paul means when he says God will raise us by his power."

Ask the person playing God, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am sad because the Corinthian believers do not understand how much I care for them," or
- "It hurts me when people do things that are not good for them," or
- "I want them to have a good life, even here on this earth!"

Paul says, "Do you not know that your bodies are parts of Christ? Should I take the parts of Christ and join them to someone who is not good? No! Do you not know that he who joins himself to someone who is not good becomes one body with that person? For it is said, 'The two will become one flesh.' But whoever is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am trying to help them understand how serious it is to join our bodies to others in wrong ways," or
- "I want them to see that being joined to Christ is a spiritual union that should affect how we use our bodies," or
- "I am using Scripture to show them the importance of this truth."

Ask the person playing the Holy Spirit, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am working to help the believers understand this important truth," or
- "I want to guide them to see how their union with Christ should affect their actions," or
- "I am reminding them of the Scripture that supports what Paul is teaching," or
- "God made these bodies as temples where I live. The believers do not see this truth yet. I'm sad that it is hard for me to live in these believers when they hurt their own bodies like this."

Paul says, "Run away from wrong use of the body. Every other sin a person does is outside the body. But the person who uses the body in a wrong way sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is in you. You have received the Holy Spirit from God. You do not belong to yourselves. You were bought at a price. So honor God with your body."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I care for them, and I am concerned for them, so I am strongly urging them to avoid misusing their bodies," or
- "I am frustrated with these believers! I want them to understand that their bodies are special because the Holy Spirit lives in them," or
- "I am reminding them that they belong to God now, not themselves."

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I care deeply about how my people use their bodies because I love my people very much!" or
- "I want them to understand the great price I paid to make them my own," or
- "I desire for them to honor me in everything, including how they use their bodies."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 6:12–20 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul talks about things that are **permissible**. When something is permissible, it is allowed or okay to do. Paul says that not everything that God allows is good for us. He means that even if we can do something, it might not help us or others. We need to think about whether our actions are helpful, not just if they are allowed.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use here. How will you express the idea that something can be allowed but not helpful? Pause this audio here.

Paul says we should not be **mastered** by anything. When something masters us, it controls us. We lose our freedom to choose. Paul means that we should not let anything become so important that it rules our life. This could be food, drink, or any habit that takes control of us. We should be in control of our choices, not let our desires control us.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use here. How will you express the idea of not being controlled by our desires? Pause this audio here.

Paul talks about the **body**. The body, or flesh, is the physical part of a person that we can see and touch. Paul says the body is important to God. He teaches that what we do with our body matters to God. The body is not just for this life, but God will raise it in the future. This means we should take care of our body and use it in ways that honor God.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **body**. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that each believer's body is a part of **Christ** himself. Use the same word for Christ that you have used in previous passages, and refer to Christ in the Master Glossary for more information.

Paul says that whoever unites or joins together with the **Lord** is one with him in **spirit**. Throughout this passage, Lord refers to our Lord or master Jesus. Our spirit is the inner part of a person, the part that we cannot see. Use the same words for Lord and spirit that you have used in previous passages, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about Lord and spirit of a person.

Paul says that believers should not join themselves with a **prostitute**. A prostitute, in this case, usually referred to a man or woman who sold sexual relations for money. There were many prostitutes in Corinth.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **prostitute**. Pause this audio here.

Paul warns against sexual **immorality**. Sexual immorality is any sexual activity that God does not approve of. This includes sex outside of marriage. Paul says sexual immorality is a **sin** against our own body. He means that this kind of sin hurts us in a special way. It affects our whole self, not just our body. Paul tells us to run away from sexual immorality. For more information on sexual immorality and sin, refer to immorality and sin in the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for sexual immorality as you used in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use here. How will you express the idea that sexual immorality is a sin against one's own body? Pause this audio here.

Paul says our body is a **temple** of the **Holy Spirit**. A temple is a special building for worship. In the past, God's presence was in the temple. Now, Paul means that God's Holy Spirit lives in our body. This makes our body very special and important. We should treat our body with respect because God's Spirit lives in us. For more information on temple and Holy Spirit, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same words or phrases for temple and Holy Spirit as you used in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will express the idea that our bodies are like temples where the Holy Spirit lives. Pause this audio here.

Paul says we should **glorify** God with our body. To glorify means to praise and honor. We glorify God when we use our body in ways that please God. This means we should make choices that show respect for our body and for God. We can glorify God by taking care of our health, by using our body to help others, and by avoiding things that dishonor God. For more information on glorify, refer to the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **glorify**. How will you express the idea of honoring God with our bodies?

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (18577062 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 3](#)
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[mp3 zip](#) (18549790 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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1 Corinthians 7:1–9

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Cor 7:1–9 and put it in your hearts.

Before you have any group discussions for this passage, stop and decide as a group how you prefer to talk about it. This passage talks about the physical relationship between husbands and wives, sexual sin, and temptation. In your culture, what is the best way to talk about these things? Would it be good to divide into groups of men and women for this conversation? Do you want to work in a different way than you do in other sections? Pause this audio here.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Cor 7:1–9 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the audio version of all of 1 Corinthians 7 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This passage is the first in a series of closely connected passages in chapter 7. The people in the church in Corinth had a lot of questions about marriage, separation, staying single, and marrying again after a husband or wife had died. They sent their questions to Paul in a letter. In the following passages, Paul is answering all those questions from the Corinthians. In all of these passages, Paul connects each question to a big idea: life with God is bigger than our individual status or circumstances or the things and people in the world around us. We do not need to try to change our circumstances. The world itself will soon come to an end. But life with God will go on forever. God loves us as we are, and we can serve God right where we are. It is important to understand each passage as part of the larger section.

Now stop and listen to an audio version of just 1 Corinthians 7:1-9 in the easiest-to-understand translation. Pause this audio here.

At the end of the last part of his letter, Paul tells the believers in Corinth that they should give honor to God with their bodies. He says that they are connected to Jesus in their body and in their spirit. They should think of their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit and that they belong to God because of the price that Jesus paid to save them.

In this part of his letter, Paul is responding to some more questions that the people in the church had sent him in a letter. They asked questions about the relationships between husbands and wives, and also about those who were widows, or those who were not married. In chapter 7, Paul discusses each question one by one. In these discussions, Paul sometimes says that he is giving his own personal advice, and other times he says he is giving instructions from the Lord.

In this passage, Paul starts by responding to what someone wrote in their letter to him. They wrote, "It is good for a man not to marry," which probably means to not have sexual relations with his wife. Paul responds to that idea by saying that it is good for people to marry, since so many people commit sexual sins. He explains that husbands and wives should care for each other in their physical relationship, and that they should not hold back physical love from their partner. He emphasizes that if you are married, your body does not belong to you alone, it also belongs to your husband or wife. If you hold back physical love from them, you are taking what belongs to them.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about how you talk about sexual relationships between husbands and wives. How do you talk about this when both men and women are together? Pause this audio here.

Paul then describes a time when a couple might not have their normal sexual relationship. He says that it would be okay to hold back sexual relations as long as both the husband and wife agree, so that they can devote themselves to prayer for a period of time. After that short time, they should come together again, so that Satan will not be able to tempt them to give in to their sexual desires with someone else. Paul adds that this idea of stopping their sexual relations for a time of separate prayer is not a command from God, it is just a suggestion.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do people think about the needs and feelings of the husband and the wife in a marriage? Pause this audio here.

Paul also says he wishes everyone could stay single or not married as he is, but he knows that some people are better off being married, and that is also okay. God has given each person their own special ability, or gift. God has given some people the special ability to be single, and he has given others the special ability to be married. He emphasizes this point by repeating that for the unmarried people and for the widows it is best to remain single. But if they want to marry because they have strong sexual desires, that is acceptable as well. It is better to get married than to struggle with strong sexual temptation.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what kind of advice do single people hear about getting married? If a person's husband or wife dies, what choices do they have for their future? Pause this audio here.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:1–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has 2 parts.

In the first part: Paul is talking to those who are married. Paul says that it is good for people to be married, and that husbands and wives should have regular sexual relations. This will help them to avoid temptation. He also suggests one time when it is okay to pause their sexual relationship.

In the second part: Paul is talking to those who are single. Paul says that it is good for those who are single to stay single. He also says that if they are struggling with sexual temptation, it is okay for them to marry.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Husbands and wives
- Satan
- Single people and widows

The people in the church in Corinth had sent Paul a letter, asking him some questions about those people who are married and those people who are not married. So at the beginning of this part of his letter, Paul says that he is responding to their questions.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Imagine that you got a letter from someone, and now you are responding to their questions in that letter. Pay attention to how you start the response, and use a similar way to respond here. Pause this audio here.

In this first part, Paul is talking to married people. Paul seems to quote a part of their letter, which says, "It is good for a man not to marry." Some translations say, "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." Paul responds to that idea by saying that it is good for people to marry, because so many people were sinning sexually. A husband should have sexual relations with his wife, and the wife with her husband. They should not hold back physical love from each other. Paul adds that a husband and wife may hold back from physical love for a specific reason, to devote themselves to prayer. But they should only do this if both the husband and the wife agree, and they should only do this for a certain time. After that, they should come back together again, so that Satan will not tempt them to sin sexually. Paul adds that this idea that they can pause their normal sexual relations for prayer, is not a command from God, it is just a suggestion. At the end of the part, Paul says he wishes everyone was single like him. He also says that God has given each person a special ability, or gift. Some have the special ability to be single, and others have the special ability to be married. Both ways of living are acceptable.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you make it clear in your translation that Paul is saying that both husbands and wives must care for each other's needs equally? Pause this audio here.

In the second part, Paul is talking to those who are single. The words in the next part start with a shift, showing that Paul is changing his focus. He is now talking to those who are not married. Some of them have never been married, and some others were married before, but their husband or wife died.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Imagine you are talking to one small group of people, and now you want to change, and talk to another small group of people. In your language, how do you show that change? Use that expression here. Pause this audio here.

Paul says to those people who are not married, and to those people who are widows, that it is best for them to remain single, as he is. But if it is hard to control themselves because of sexual temptation, they should marry.

That is acceptable as well. Paul says it is better to get married than to burn with passion. This means to struggle with strong sexual temptation.

Normally, at this point the group will storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. Because this chapter talks about the physical relationship between husbands and wives, sexual sin, and temptation, it may be difficult to do that. The main purpose of this activity is to help you remember the parts and characters in this passage. How do you want to do that for this passage, in a way that honors Christ and is appropriate in your culture?

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:1–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Normally, in this step, the group will dramatize the passage. But because this chapter talks about the physical relationship between husbands and wives, sexual sin, and temptation, it may be difficult to do that. The main purpose of this activity is to feel it deeply and talk about your feelings about the passage. How do you want to do that for this passage, in a way that honors Christ and is appropriate in your culture?

Pause this audio here to discuss how you want to go forward.

If you decide to go forward with the dramatization, here is the information you need.

This passage has 2 parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Husbands and wives
- Satan
- Single people and widows

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the flow and the ideas in the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses, if you choose to do one. It is optional.

The person playing Paul pretends to read a letter, and to think about it. Then he starts writing a response. The first part of his response is to husbands and wives. The people playing husbands and wives could act out having a wedding. They should show in some appropriate way that they have regular physical relations, and should not hold back love from each other.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the wife, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I feel loved," or
- "I feel safe because he will not be tempted."

Now, the married couple will discuss, agree to separate, and go pray. After their prayer time is over, they should come back together again and show in an appropriate way that they have resumed their regular physical relationship. The person playing Satan should show that he can no longer tempt them.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the husband, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am happy that we did not pray for too long!" or
- "I thank God for my wife."

Now, the person playing Paul should show that he is shifting his attention to the other group. Now he is talking to single people and widows. He shows that it is good if they stay single, as he is. But if they really want to marry because they are struggling with sexual temptation, that is better for them. They should get married.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the single who got married, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am so happy that I can finally be married!" or
- "I feel relieved that I can honor God with my desires instead of sinning by having sexual relations when I was not married."

One person playing a single person could act out longing for marriage and then marrying another single.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the single who got married, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am so thankful that God gave me a wife," or
- "I feel so relieved that God has seen my needs and answered my prayers."

One person playing a widow could act out being content and staying alone.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the widow who did not marry again, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am happy. I do not need anything else," or
- "I am content to serve God freely."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:1-9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul tells the Corinthians that many people in Corinth are committing sexual **immorality**. Sexual immorality can mean many things. It is a sexual sin of any kind.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **immorality**. Use the same word or phrase as you used in 1 Cor 5:11. For more information, refer to immorality in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Paul is talking with the people in Corinth about what a Christian marriage should be like. Paul says **marital duty** as a polite way to talk about the physical relationship between husband and wife. It focuses on the rights of the other person.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **marital duty**, or the physical relationship between husband and wife. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that each person should **fulfill** their marital duty to their husband or wife. When someone fulfills something, they return to someone something that belongs to them. It is proper to give it to the other person, and they have the right to expect it.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **fulfill**. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the husband does not have **authority** over his own body, his wife does. Someone who has authority has the right and the power to make decisions and judgments. In this passage, Paul tells the husband and wife to give up that authority to make decisions, and to give it to the other person.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **authority**. For more information, refer to authority in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that husbands and wives should not **deprive** one another of normal physical relations. Deprive is the opposite of fulfill. It means to keep back from someone something that belongs to them. It is not proper to keep it from them, and they have the right to expect it.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **deprive**. Pause this audio here.

The name **Satan** means the adversary, enemy, or accuser. It is the name for the devil, the leader of all evil spirits. Use the same name for Satan you have used before. For more information, refer to Satan in the Master Glossary.

Paul says that each person has their own **gift** from God. Use the same word for gift that you used in the first part of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. For more information, refer to gift in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 7:1–9

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (12468336 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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[mp3 zip](#) (9493095 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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1 Corinthians 7:10–16

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Cor 7:10–16 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Cor 7:10–16 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Cor 7:10–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the last passage, Paul was talking to the Corinthians about some questions that they had about marriage. He told husbands and wives that they should honor each other by having regular sexual relations. He said it was okay to pause their regular sexual relations for a time of prayer, and then they should come back together again. The reason for this advice was to help men and women resist the temptation of sexual sin. Paul also said to single people that it is good if they stay unmarried. But if they were struggling with sexual temptation, it would be better for them to get married.

Now, in this passage, Paul continues to answer some of the questions from the Corinthian people. He talks to two groups of people. First, Paul talks to married couples who are both believers. Then, he talks to married couples where one person is a believer and the other is not. Paul's advice for them is different, depending on their situation. Paul is very clear about the source of his instructions. If the instructions are words of Jesus, he tells the people that. If he is giving advice based on his own authority as an apostle, he tells the people that as well.

In the first part, Paul tells married believers that they should not separate or divorce. He says that these are the words of Jesus, not his own words. You will remember that the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke all recorded that Jesus told his disciples that anyone who divorces their husbands or wives are committing adultery, or sinning. Paul says that if a woman does separate from her husband, she must either stay single or get back together with her husband. Paul says it is the same rule for the husband.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what do people think about divorce or separation? Pause this audio here.

In the next part, Paul is giving advice based on his own authority as an apostle. He is not directly quoting Jesus. He is talking about a situation that Jesus did not specifically speak about during His ministry. Paul is talking to believers who have a husband or wife who is not a believer. Paul says that if one person in the marriage is not a believer but wants to stay married, the believer should not divorce them. Paul explains that the unbelieving husband or wife becomes holy through their believing partner. This does not mean that they automatically become a Christian. The word holy means that something or someone is set apart for a special purpose. In this passage, Paul says that God has set apart the unbelieving husband or wife to receive a benefit if they stay married to their husband or wife who is a believer. Paul says that the children also receive this benefit of holiness if the parents stay married.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Imagine a couple who are happy in their marriage, and who love each other. One day, the wife heard about Jesus and believed. The husband has not yet believed in Jesus. What are some ways that the husband might receive a blessing or benefit, now that his wife knows Jesus? What are some ways that their children might receive a benefit or blessing? Pause this audio here.

Now Paul shifts his focus to a different situation. Paul is still talking to believers who have a husband or wife who is not a believer. But in this case, Paul is talking about a situation where the unbelieving husband or wife wants to leave the marriage. Paul says, in this case, the believer is free to let them go. The believer is not like a slave in this kind of marriage. God wants people to live a peaceful life, so forcing them to stay if they are unhappy is not the right choice.

Earlier, Paul said that the unbelieving husband or wife becomes holy through their believing partner. But this does not mean that they automatically become a Christian. We know that is true, because now Paul says that a believer cannot know if God will save their husband or wife. That is part of the reason that the believer is free to let them go.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what will a wife experience if her husband leaves her? What will a husband experience if his wife leaves him? Pause this audio here.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has 3 parts.

In the first part: Paul is talking to married couples who are both believers. Paul tells married believers that they should not separate or divorce. He says that these are the words of Jesus, not his own words.

In the second part: Paul is talking to believers who are married to unbelievers. Paul says that if the person in the marriage who is not a believer wants to stay married, the believer should not divorce them. It is best for them and their children if they stay married. In this part, Paul says that these are his own words, not something that Jesus said.

In the third part: Paul is still talking to believers who are married to unbelievers. Paul talks about a situation where the unbelieving husband or wife wants to leave the marriage. Paul says, in this case, the believer should let them go.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Jesus
- Married couple who are both believers
- Married couple with one believer and one nonbeliever
- And children with one parent who is a believer, and one who is not a believer

In this passage, Paul talks about three different kinds of marriage situations, and it is important to show in your translation that each one is different. Depending on the situation, the instructions are very different. You may want to draw three big circles to represent the three groups. Explain that different kinds of marriage situations are in these circles. The big idea is to show that if someone is in one circle, they have certain instructions. But if they are in the second circle, they have different instructions. And if they are in the third circle, their instructions are different again. It is important to highlight that the instructions for each circle must stay connected to the situation in that circle. You cannot take the instructions from one circle, and try to apply them to a different circle. Then you would not correctly understand this part of Paul's letter.

In the first part, Paul is talking to married couples who are both believers. These couples are in the first circle. Paul reminds the Corinthians that Jesus gave a command about marriage to these people. Jesus said that they should not separate or divorce. Separation and divorce are different words, but they have the same end result. When a wife separates, it means she leaves. When a husband divorces, it means he sends a wife away. Then Jesus said, even if for some reason a woman does separate from her husband, she must either stay single or get back together with her husband. Paul says it is the same rule for the husband.

In the second part, Paul is talking to believers who have a husband or wife who is not a believer. These couples are in the second circle. Now Paul is giving advice based on his own authority as an apostle, not directly quoting Jesus. He is talking about a situation that Jesus did not specifically speak about during His ministry on earth. Paul says that if the unbelieving husband or wife wants to stay married, they should stay married. Paul says that the unbelieving husband becomes holy because of his wife. Paul says their children also become holy. Paul adds that if the unbelieving husband or wife did not become holy, their children would be unclean, or unfit for service to God. But since the unbelieving husband or wife did become holy, their children also become holy. This does not mean that they automatically become Christians. The word holy means that someone is set apart for a special purpose. In this passage, Paul says that God has set apart the unbelieving husband or wife to receive a benefit if they stay married to their husband or wife who is a believer. Paul says that the children also receive this benefit of holiness if the parents stay married.

In the third part, Paul continues to give advice based on his own authority as an apostle. He is not directly quoting Jesus. Paul is still talking to believers who have a husband or wife who is not a believer. But in this case, Paul is talking about a situation where the unbelieving husband or wife wants to leave the marriage. This is the third circle. Paul says, in this case, the believer is free to let them go. The believer is not like a slave in this kind of marriage. God wants people to live a peaceful life, so forcing the unbeliever to stay if they are unhappy is not the right choice. Paul then makes a strong statement by asking two questions. Paul asks, "How can you know,

wife, if you will save your husband? And how can you know, husband, if you will save your wife?" Paul means that the believer cannot know if they will save their husband or wife. Paul knows that only God can save people from their sins. No person can do that for another person, and no person can know when or how God will do it. That is part of the reason that the believer is free to let them go.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Imagine there is a group of children and young people, and they are helping you do some work. You divide them by age into three different groups. The older ones can do harder work, and the very young ones can do easier work. You say to them, "If you are in the group of 18-year-olds, then do this job. But if you are in the group of 12-year-olds, then do this other job. But if you are in the group of 4-year-olds, then you can do this other job over here." In your language, how do you show the contrast between the different groups? How do you show that you are shifting from the first group to the second group? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about the same story about the groups of children. In your language, how do you show a strong connection between their age and the job that they got? "If you are 12, then do this job." Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:10–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has 3 parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Jesus
- Married couple who are both believers
- Married couple with one believer and one nonbeliever
- And children with one parent who is a believer, and one who is not a believer

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

The drama should show that there are three different kinds of marriage situations, each with different instructions. In your drama, you may want to move to three different parts of the room to represent the three situations. The big idea is to show that if someone is in one part of the room, they have certain instructions. But if they are in the second part of the room, they have different instructions. And if they are in the third part of the room, their instructions are different again. It is important to highlight that the instructions for each circle

must stay connected to the situation in that place. You cannot take the instructions from one place, and try to apply them to a different place. That would give a very wrong understanding of the passage.

At the beginning of the play, Paul is talking to married couples who are both believers. This group is in the first part of the room. Paul reminds the Corinthians that Jesus gave a command about marriage. The person playing Jesus should talk first, then the person playing Paul can talk to the married believers, telling them that Jesus said that they should not separate or divorce. But if a woman does separate from her husband, she must either stay single or get back together with her husband. Paul says it is the same rule for the husband. The people playing the married believers could act like they are fighting, but then they hear that Jesus said they should not separate or divorce, so they reconcile.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the husband, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am ashamed that I forgot the teachings of Jesus," or
- "I am still angry with her, but I will try to be more patient."

Then, the person playing the wife should act like she is leaving her husband for a short time. Then she remembers that Paul said that she must either stay single or get back together with her husband, so she decides to go back to her husband and they reconcile. The person playing the husband could repeat the same scene, only this time he is the one who leaves his wife behind, then he comes back. Or, he also might stay separated from her, but in this case he should act out not marrying another person.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person who stayed behind after their husband or wife left, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am so sad. It is painful that he left me!" or
- "I am still angry. He knows Jesus! It is not right!"

In the second part of the play, the person playing Paul should shift to the second part of the room. Paul is now talking to a different group, believers who have a husband or wife who is not a believer. There is another shift. Now Paul says that these are his own words, he is not directly quoting Jesus. The person playing Jesus could show that he did not talk about this specific situation during his ministry on earth. In this part of the room, a man playing an unbelieving husband and a woman playing his believing wife should show that they are happy to stay married, even though they don't agree about their faith. For them, Paul's advice is that they should stay married.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the unbelieving husband, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I feel confused about her new faith, but I love her. I am glad we can stay together," or
- "I am curious about her new faith. I want to learn more."

The people playing the couple should find a way to show a blessing or benefit of holiness transferring from the woman playing the believing wife to the man playing her unbelieving husband, and to those playing their children. In this play, either the husband or the wife can be the believer or the unbeliever. The advice is the same for both.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the unbelieving husband, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am amazed at how different she is," or
- "I feel happier living with her because she is so much more pleasant," or
- "I love how she is more peaceful and patient now in her new faith."

In the third part of the play, the person playing Paul should shift to the third part of the room. Paul is still talking to believers who have a husband or wife who is not a believer. And he is still speaking his own words, not the commands of Jesus. But with this group the circumstances are very different. In this part of the room, a man playing an unbelieving husband and a woman playing his believing wife should show that they are fighting, because they disagree about their faith. The husband may show that he is very angry that his wife decided to follow Jesus, and does not want to live with her anymore. The person playing Paul should show that it is okay for the husband to leave. The wife should show that she is free and can now live in peace after her husband leaves. The person playing Paul can somehow show the believing wife that she is free because it is impossible to know if her husband will choose to follow Jesus or not. In this play, either the husband or the wife can be the believer or the unbeliever. The advice is the same for both.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the believer who stayed behind, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am sad that he chose to leave me," or
- "It is nice to finally have peace in our house," or
- "I pray for him all the time, that God will save him and bring him home to us."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul tells the people in Corinth that some of his words are directly from the **Lord**, and others are not. Paul was talking about Jesus. He meant that Jesus said these words while he was alive. When Paul called Jesus Lord, he was saying that Jesus has authority over them, just like God has. Use the same word for Lord that you have used in previous passages. Lord is in the Master Glossary.

Paul tells the Corinthians believers that they should not **separate** or **divorce**. Separation and divorce are different words, but they have the same end result. In Paul's culture, when a wife separates, it means she leaves. When a husband divorces, it means he sends a wife away. Divorce happens when two people decide not to be married anymore, and they legally end their marriage.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **separation** and **divorce**. Look up divorce in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the Corinthians believers that they should not separate or divorce. But if they do separate, they should try to **reconcile**. This means that they should make things right again after their disagreement or problem.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **reconcile**. Look up reconcile in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Paul talks about unbelieving husbands and wives in this passage. Use the same word for **unbeliever** as you have used in previous passages. For more information, look up believer in the Master Glossary.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers who have an unbelieving husband or wife, that the unbelieving husband or wife becomes holy through their believing partner. When a person is **sanctified**, or becomes holy, it means that God has set apart that person for a special purpose. In this passage, Paul is not saying that the unbelieving

husband or wife will automatically become Christians. It means that God has set them apart in a general sense to belong to him. But they still have the choice to believe or not believe in Jesus, as we see later in the passage. Use the same word for sanctified as you used in previous passages, and remember that sanctification is in the Master Glossary.

Paul tells the Corinthians that God has made an unbelieving husband or wife acceptable to him through their believing husband or wife. Because of this, their children will not be **unclean**, but they will be **holy**, or set apart for God's purposes. This is not talking about whether they are clean or dirty from the outside. Unclean means someone that is not pure or acceptable to God. In this passage, it means the opposite of holy. Use the same word for holy that you used in previous passages. Holy is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **unclean**. Look up clean/unclean in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul was talking to the believers who had a husband or wife who was not a believer, and he said that the unbeliever was free to leave the marriage if they wanted to. He said that the believer who stayed behind is not **bound** or **enslaved**. If someone is bound, it means that something is holding them or tying them down in a way that limits their freedom. Enslaved means that someone forces another person to work or follow orders without giving them freedom or control over their own life. In this passage, Paul is not talking about real slavery, but about the feeling that a person might have if they are trapped in a difficult marriage, without freedom or control.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **bound** or **enslaved** in this passage. Pause this audio here.

Paul was talking to the believers who had a husband or wife who was not a believer, and he said that the unbeliever was free to leave the marriage if they wanted to. One reason that Paul gives is that God invites, or **calls**, us to live in **peace**. Peace means that people are well, content, and that they are living in harmony with each other and with God. Use the same word for called and for peace that you have used before in this book. Look up peace in the Master Glossary for more information.

Paul was talking to the believers who had a husband or wife who was not a believer, and he said that the unbeliever was free to leave the marriage if they wanted to. One reason Paul gave them for this was that the believer could never know if they would be able to **save** their unbelieving husband or wife. To save someone means to help them, or rescue them from a difficult or dangerous situation. In this passage, Paul meant that the person might help their husband or wife to believe in Jesus so that God would save him. Use the same word for save that you have used in previous passages, and look up salvation in the Master Glossary for more information about save.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 7:10–16

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 7:17–24

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Cor 7:17–24 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Cor 7:17–24 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:17–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the previous parts of his letter, Paul has been answering some questions that the people in Corinth had about marriage. He told the single people that it is best for them to stay single. He told the married people that they should stay married. If a believer was married to an unbeliever, he told them that it is best for them to stay married, as long as the unbelieving partner is willing to do that. Paul also said that even though these choices are best in general, for some people there may be a better choice, depending on their personal circumstances.

Now in this passage, Paul shows that those teachings are part of a general rule that he gives to all the churches. His rule is that people should stay in the way of life God gave them when they became believers. Paul says that God is the one who gave them that assignment, so they do not have to change their situation in life to please God or to serve him. So each believer should stay the way they were when God first called them to belong to Christ.

After talking about the general rule, Paul gives two examples. The first one is about circumcision. In Corinth, men who were circumcised were Jewish, and men who were not circumcised were from other cultures. When God first made the Israelites, now the Jewish people, his special people, God told them to circumcise their baby boys. The Israelites would cut off the loose skin of every baby boy's penis to show that the Israelites were God's special people. Some Jewish believers in Jesus thought that now they had to circumcise all men from all cultures who decided to follow Jesus. Paul says if a man was already circumcised at the time that he believed in Jesus, he should not try to change that. In the same way, if a man was not circumcised at the time that he believed in Jesus, he should not try to change that. Paul says that being circumcised or not does not matter. Paul meant that people do not need to change their status or cultural identity to follow Jesus. What matters is that everyone should follow God's commands. Then Paul repeats the general rule again. Each believer should stay the way they were when God first called them to belong to Christ.

Paul gives another example of his general rule. The second example is about slavery. Paul says that if someone was a slave when they believed in Jesus, they should not worry about that. Paul is not saying that slavery is good. Paul tells the slaves that if they do have the opportunity to gain their freedom, they should use it. But Paul wants the Corinthians to understand that those who are slaves in this world are actually free if they believe in Jesus. What he means is that Jesus has set them free from being slaves to sin. Then Paul says that those who are free in this world are actually Christ's slaves, if they believe in Jesus. What he means is that as believers, we now belong to Christ, in the same way that a slave belongs to his master. He makes this point stronger by saying, "Jesus paid the price to buy you." Then he tells them that they should not become slaves of men. Paul was saying that he wanted the Corinthians to remember that Christ was their new master. Paul is emphasizing that no matter a person's social status, all believers belong to Christ. All believers could serve Jesus as they were, and where they were.

Finally, Paul repeats his main point again. He says each believer should stay the way they were when God first called them to belong to Christ.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what are the levels of status or hierarchy? How can someone see the difference between a high status person and a lower status person? What kinds of activities does each group do, or not do? Can you think of a time when someone in the community tried to change from one status to another? What happened when they tried that?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:17–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has 1 big idea with 2 parts.

Before the first part: Paul gives the big idea. Paul says that there is a general rule that he gives to all the churches. His rule is that people should stay in the way of life God gave them when they became believers.

In the first part: Paul uses circumcision as an example of the rule. He says that it does not make any difference if a man is circumcised or not. What matters is that they follow God's commands.

After the first part: Paul repeats his big idea again.

In the second part: Paul talks about the same rule again, this time using slavery as an example. He says that it does not make any difference if a man was a slave or not. What matters is that all believers now belong to Christ. Christ is their master, and he makes all of them truly free.

After the second part: Paul repeats his big idea again.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God
- Men who are circumcised
- Men who are not circumcised
- People who are slaves
- People who are free
- Christ

At the beginning of this part of Paul's letter, there is an important connector that shows that Paul is still following the same big idea from the last two passages in his letter. They are all connected. However, the passage just before this one was talking about an exception to his main point. Now with this connector, Paul shows that he is returning to his main idea. In fact, this passage is the most important part of the whole section, as we can see because he emphasizes his big idea very clearly three times.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Imagine this story. It is harvest time in the village, and it is very important for everyone to help collect the harvest because bad weather is coming. The chief of the village announces, "Everyone must come and help collect the harvest!" One man says to the chief, "My wife is nine months pregnant," so the chief replies, "Everyone must help, but your wife should rest." Another man says to the chief, "Sir, my grandmother is very old and is not well," so the chief replies, "Everyone must help! But it is okay for your grandmother to rest. Even so, everyone must help!" Try saying it in your language. Pay attention to how you connected "it is okay for your grandmother to rest" and "everyone must help." That is the kind of connection that Paul uses at the beginning of this passage. Pause this audio here.

In this passage, Paul starts with a big idea. Paul says that there is a general rule that he gives to all the churches. His rule is that people should stay in the way of life God gave them when they became believers. Paul says that God is the one who gave them that assignment, so they do not have to change their situation in life to please God or to serve him. So each believer should stay the way they were when God first called them to belong to Christ. That is the big idea that has two smaller parts in it.

In the first part, Paul talks about his general rule, using circumcision as an example. Paul says if a man was already circumcised at the time that he believed in Jesus, he should not try to change that. In the same way, if a man was not circumcised at the time that he believed in Jesus, he should not try to change that. Paul says that being circumcised or not does not matter. What matters is that we should follow God's commands.

Then he repeats the general rule again. Each believer should stay the way they were when God first called them to belong to Christ.

In the second part, Paul talks about his general rule, using slavery as an example. Paul says that if someone was a slave when they believed in Jesus, they should not worry about trying to become free. Paul is not saying that

slavery is good. Paul tells the slaves that if they do have the opportunity to gain their freedom, they should use it. Paul says that those who are slaves in this world are actually free if they believe in Jesus. Then Paul says that those who are free in this world are actually Christ's slaves, if they believe in Jesus. He makes this point stronger by saying, "Jesus paid the price to buy you." Then he tells them that they should not become slaves of men. Paul was saying that he wanted the Corinthians to remember that Christ was their new master.

Finally, Paul repeats his main point again. He says each believer should stay the way they were when God first called them to belong to Christ. This time Paul adds something important. Paul says the believers should stay, with God, the way they were when God first called them to belong to Christ. Paul is emphasizing that God is with the believers, and the believers are with God, no matter their status or circumstances in life. This idea has been repeated three times in the passage, showing that it is very important.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, when someone is telling a story, how do they emphasize the most important idea in a story? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:17–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has 2 parts which are inside a big idea.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God
- Men who are circumcised
- Men who are not circumcised
- People who are slaves
- People who are free
- Christ

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In this passage, Paul starts with a big idea. The person playing Paul could show that he is making a big, important point. He has a rule that he tells all the churches, wherever he goes in his ministry. His rule is that people should stay in the way of life God gave them when they became believers. Paul says that God is the one who gave them that assignment. So each believer should stay the way they were when God first called them to belong to Christ.

Next, the person playing Paul could show that he is giving two examples to illustrate his big idea. His first example is about circumcision. The men playing the circumcised group, or Jewish men, could stand in one place, and the men playing the uncircumcised group, or men from other cultures, could stand in a different place. The person playing God could show that he loves both groups in the same way, and has invited them to follow Jesus in the same way. Now, one or two men from the circumcised group should try to leave their place to join the other group. One or two men from the uncircumcised group should try to leave their place to join the other group. The person playing Paul should say or show that they do not need to change their cultural identity in order for God to accept them. They are free to stay in their own place and worship God as they are.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing a man in the uncircumcised group, "How did you feel when you learned that you do not have to change your cultural identity for God to accept you?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am so relieved! I did not want to get circumcised!" or
- "I am thankful that Jesus accepts me as I am."

Then the person playing Paul should repeat his general rule again to remind the men how important it is. Each believer should stay the way they were when God first called them to belong to Christ.

In the second part, the person playing Paul should tell the people that he has another example.

The people playing slaves could stand in one place, and the people playing those who are free could stand in a different place. The person playing God could show that he loves both groups in the same way, and has invited them to follow Jesus in the same way. Now, one or two people from the slave group should try to leave their place to join the other group. The person playing Paul should show that they do not need to do that, they should just stay in their own place and worship God as they are. But, then Paul should show that if one of the slaves has a chance to get free, they should. That would be good.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing a slave who was told to stay in the slave group, "How did you feel when you learned that you can worship and serve God as you are?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am grateful. I did not think I could serve God in my position," or
- "I am still struggling to accept that. It does not seem fair."

Now ask the person playing a slave who got his freedom, "How did you feel when you learned that it was okay to get your freedom?" The person might answer things like:

- "I'm so relieved! My master was cruel!" or
- "I am thankful that Jesus allowed me to have a new life."

Now, the person playing Jesus should show that he has paid the price to buy all of the people, so now he is the master. He could tell them, "Now I want to show you what is really true about you." The person playing Jesus should take all of the people in the slave group, and put them in the free place. Jesus could say to them, "You who are slaves in this world are actually free if you believe in me! You no longer live in spiritual slavery." Then, Jesus should take all of the people in the free group, and put them in the slave place. Then Jesus could say to those in the free group, "You who are free in this world are actually my slaves, if you believe in me! I paid the price to buy you." Then Jesus could say to all of them, "None of you should be slaves of any man. I am your new master now."

Finally, the person playing Paul should repeat his big idea again for the third time. Each believer should stay the way they were when God first called them to belong to Christ. This time, the person playing Paul should point to the person playing God and show that God is with them, and they are together.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing a slave who went to the free group, "How did you feel when you learned that Jesus has truly set you free in your spirit?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am grateful. I did not think I could serve God in my position," or
- "I am still struggling to accept that. It does not seem fair."

Now ask the person playing a free man who went to the slave group, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like:

- "I never truly understood that Jesus bought me! I have bought slaves, and I expect them to obey me," or
- "I feel ashamed. I didn't know it would feel so shameful for people to think of me as a slave."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:17–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul tells the believers in Corinth three times that they should stay in the situation they were in when God **called** them. In this passage, "the time that God called you" means the time that God invited you and chose you. It is the time when you become a believer. Use the same word for called that you have used in previous passages.

The **Lord** Jesus has assigned people to, or put them in, their specific circumstances in life. Use the same word for Lord that you have used in previous passages, and refer to Lord in the Master Glossary for more information.

Paul gives his big idea as something that he teaches in all the **churches** where he goes. Use the same word for church as you have used in previous passages, and refer to church in the Master Glossary for more information.

In Corinth, some believers were Jewish and some of them were from other cultures. Jewish people practiced **circumcision**, which is the custom of cutting off the loose skin at the end of a baby boy's penis. Circumcision was a sign that God had included a person in the covenant that God had made with the people of Israel. The other cultures in Corinth did not have this custom.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **circumcision**. Look up circumcision in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the only thing that is important is that people keep God's **commandments**. God's commandments were the general rules that God gave his people, first through Moses. When Jesus was teaching on the earth, he said that these laws were from God and these laws tell us how to live.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **commandments**. Look up commandment in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

In Corinth, there were people who bought and sold people as if they were property, and made them **slaves**. A slave is a man or a woman who works for another person, often without having any choice or any pay. In Corinth, some slaves had believed in Jesus, and were worshiping in the church along with those who were free, or who owned slaves.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **slave**. Look up slave in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

In Corinth, some believers were slaves and some were **free** people. Those who are free do not have a human master or owner. They have a job, but nobody is forcing them to work.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **free**. Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the free men in Corinth that they are now **Christ's** slaves, because Christ paid the price to buy them so he is now their master. Use the same name for Christ you have used before. For more information, refer to Christ in the Master Glossary.

When Paul is talking to the believers in Corinth, he calls them **brothers**, or **brothers and sisters**. Paul was talking to the men and women in the church when he said this. Paul wanted to remind the people in the church that God made them into one family now that they believed in Jesus.

Use the same word for brothers, or brothers and sisters, you have used before.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 7:17-24

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 7:25-31

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 7:25–31 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:25–31 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:25–31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the previous part of his letter, Paul repeated the big idea of this whole chapter three times to show that it was very important. The big idea was that believers should stay in the way of life that they were in when they first believed in Jesus. Paul wanted the believers to know that the believers did not need to change their status in order to please God. Some of the people in Corinth had written questions to Paul. Some of the questions were about marriage, and about being single. Paul answered their questions, and kept reminding them of his big idea in his answers.

Now, in this passage, Paul is answering another question. This time Paul is talking to virgins, or young ladies who are engaged to be married. These young ladies have never married. Paul could also be talking to young men who have never been married, but he is probably talking to young women specifically. As Paul did in a previous passage, Paul tells the Corinthians that the Lord Jesus did not say anything specific about unmarried young women while Jesus was on earth. Paul says he will give his judgment, or what Paul thinks is right to do. Paul tells the Corinthians that they can trust Paul's thinking, because Jesus has shown mercy to Paul. Paul is saying that Jesus has kindly given Paul the wisdom that Paul needs to answer this question himself.

Paul then says that it is good for people who are not married to stay as they are. The church in Corinth was in a time of great trouble, because many people were persecuting the believers and making life hard for them.

This would not be an easy time to get married. Paul again repeats the big idea that Paul has been saying in the previous passages. People who are married should stay married, and people who are single should stay single. The Corinthians should honor whatever commitments they have made to their husband or wife, or to anyone they have promised to marry. Paul then says that it is not a sin to get married. A person who gets married is not doing anything wrong. The believers are already living in a time of great trouble, and when a person gets married, they add more cares and troubles to their life. Paul is telling the Corinthians that he cares about the Corinthians, and he wants to protect the Corinthians from adding more troubles to their lives.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what kind of advice do single people hear about getting married? Pause this audio here.

Paul wants the Corinthians to think about the things that are bigger than their marriages, or their feelings, or their possessions. The Corinthians' time in the world is difficult, but it will be short. Paul says that men who have wives should live as if they do not have a wife. Paul is not saying that the believers should abandon or neglect their wives. Rather, Paul wants the believers to remember that their marriages will be short, but life with God lasts forever. Paul then repeats the same idea with other examples. If someone is mourning, they should live as if they are not mourning. If someone is feeling happy, they should live as if they are not happy. Again, Paul is not saying that the believers are not allowed to mourn the death of someone they love. Rather, Paul wants the believers to remember that while we struggle with death in this world, life with God lasts forever. If someone buys something, or has important business in the world, they should live as if those things are not there. In all of these examples, Paul is reminding the people of Corinth that life with God is bigger than all other things like marriage, or feelings, or possessions. Life is short, and the world is coming to an end. But life with God lasts forever.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your community, when someone has died, how do people mourn?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:25–31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul says that it is good for young women who are not married to stay as they are. The church in Corinth was in a time of great trouble, because many people were persecuting the believers and making life hard for them. This would not be an easy time to get married.

In the second part: Paul tells the people of Corinth that their time in this world is short. Paul wants the Corinthians to not think too much about things like marriage, or their feelings, or their possessions. Paul wants them to remember that life with God is more important than all these other things. Life is short, and the world is coming to an end. But life with God lasts forever.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Jesus
- Young unmarried ladies in the Corinthian church
- Married people in the Corinthian church
- Unmarried men in the Corinthian church
- People who are sad, and people who are happy
- And people who are buying, selling, and doing business

In the first part, Paul responds to one of the questions that the Corinthians had sent him. The question is about virgins, or young women who are not married. Paul says that Jesus did not specifically say anything about young women who were not married during Jesus' ministry on earth. But Paul says that Paul will tell them what Paul thinks. Paul tells the Corinthians that they can trust Paul's thinking, because Jesus has kindly made Paul a person who the Corinthians can trust to help the Corinthians with their question. Paul says that it is good for young women who are not married to stay as they are. Then, Paul starts talking to men who are engaged or who are already married. At that time, normally it was the men who made the decisions about marriage, so Paul moves from talking to the young unmarried women to talking to the men. The church in Corinth was in a time of great trouble. This would not be an easy time to get married. Paul again repeats the big idea that Paul has said in the previous passages: People who are married should stay married, and people who are single should stay single. Paul emphasizes this idea by using questions and answers. Paul asks, "Are you bound to a woman? Do not seek to be unbound, or free. Are you free from a woman? Do not seek a wife." Some people think that being bound, or tied, to a woman means that the couple are already married, and other people think it means that they are engaged to be married. In either case, the couple has promised either to get married or to remain married to each other.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: When two people promise to get married to each other, how do they talk about their marriage? When two people are married, how do they talk about being married to each other? In this passage, how will you talk about being bound or tied together as a man and a woman, and then being unbound or released from each other? Pause this audio here.

After talking about these situations, Paul then says that it is not a sin to get married. If a man and a woman want to get married, they are not doing anything wrong. But the Corinthian believers are already living in a time of great trouble, and when a person gets married, they add more cares and troubles to their life. Paul is telling the Corinthians that he cares about them, and Paul wants to protect them from adding more troubles to their lives.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Imagine that someone wrote you a letter and asked you about your three children. You have already responded to their questions about your first child, and your second child. Now you are changing to talk about your third child. Pay attention to how you start that part in your language. Use that expression here to introduce this new topic in the letter. Pause this audio here.

In the second part, Paul tells the Corinthians that their time in the world will be short. Paul says this in a strong way, emphasizing that Paul really wants the Corinthians to pay attention and listen carefully. Paul says that men who have wives should live as if they do not have a wife. Paul is not saying that the believers should abandon or neglect their wives. Rather, Paul wants the believers to remember that their marriages will be short, but life with God lasts forever. Paul then repeats the same idea with other examples. If someone is mourning, they should live as if they are not mourning. If someone is feeling happy, they should live as if they are not happy. If someone buys something, or has an important business, they should live as if those things are not there. In all of these examples, Paul is reminding the people of Corinth that life with God is bigger than all other things like marriage, or feelings, or possessions, or money. Life is short, and the world is coming to an end. But life with God lasts forever.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how do you say something when you really want to catch people's attention and make them listen and understand you very clearly? Use that expression at this point in the letter. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:25–31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Jesus
- Young unmarried ladies in the Corinthian church
- Married people in the Corinthian church
- Unmarried men in the Corinthian church
- People who are sad, and people who are happy
- And people who are buying, selling, and doing business

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first part, the person playing Paul could show that he is answering a letter that the Corinthians had sent him. He could have a conversation with the person playing Jesus. Jesus could show that he did not have any specific words about this question. Jesus could show that he is kindly giving Paul the wisdom that Paul needs to answer this question himself.

Now Paul could talk to the people playing the young unmarried ladies. Paul should advise the ladies to stay as they are. Paul should show that the church in Corinth was in a time of great trouble, so this would not be a good time to get married. Now the person playing Paul should shift and talk to the married or engaged people. Paul tells these people they should stay married or continue with their engagement. Paul should then shift to the single men and tell them that they should stay single.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing a single woman who is free to stay single, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am sad and lonely. I really wanted to get married," or
- "I am relieved that I can be free to serve God as a single woman."

Paul then could say to the single men that it is not a sin to get married. And Paul could say to the single young ladies that if they get married it is not a sin. The person playing Paul should show the single people that Paul really cares about them, and Paul wants to protect the single people from adding more troubles to their lives.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing an unmarried young lady who is free to get married, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am so thankful! I really wanted to get married and have children," or
- "I love my fiancé and I am glad we can be married and serve God as married people."

In the second part, the person playing Paul should tell the Corinthians that their time in the world will be short. Paul should say this in a strong way. Now the person playing Paul could talk to the married people, and show that they should not be thinking about each other so much. Paul could point to Jesus to help them think about Jesus more than each other. Then, the person playing Paul could talk to sad people, and to happy people. Paul could show that these people should not be thinking about their own feelings so much. Paul could point to Jesus to help them think about Jesus more than their feelings. Finally, the person playing Paul could talk to the people who are buying and selling things in the market. Paul could show that they should not be thinking so much about the things they are buying and selling, or their money. Paul could point to Jesus to help them think about Jesus more than each other.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing a rich man selling in the market, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "It is very stressful to run a business. I am always thinking about work, and I do not have time to serve God in church," or
- "This is a very stressful teaching to think about. It feels like I have no choice but to think about my work all the time. How is it possible to think about Jesus more?" or
- "I love to honor God with my money and my time."

Finally the person playing Paul should remind all of the people that their time in this world will be short, and the world is coming to an end. That is the reason Paul wants the believers to stay focused on Jesus more than any other thing.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:25-31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

In this passage Paul talks to **virgins**, or women who are **engaged to be married**. These are young women who have not been married before. In Corinthian culture most women who had not been married had never had sexual relations with a man, so they were virgins. This term is not strongly focusing on the fact that the young lady has not had sexual relations. Instead, it is focusing on the fact that she has not been married before. In the culture of the Corinthians, an engagement to be married was probably a strong agreement between two families who made promises to each other.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **virgin** or **engaged woman**. Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the Corinthians that the **Lord** has kindly helped Paul to have the wisdom Paul needs to answer the Corinthians' questions. Use the same word or phrase for Lord that you have used throughout Corinthians. For more information, look up Lord in the Master Glossary.

Paul tells the Corinthians that he will give them his **judgment**, because there are no specific instructions from Jesus on their question about unmarried women. Paul was saying that Paul would tell them his **advice**, or **opinion**, on the matter.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **judgment** when it means advice. Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the Corinthians that they can trust Paul's judgment because the Lord has shown **mercy** to Paul. When someone shows mercy, they are good, kind, or compassionate.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **mercy**. Look up mercy in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the Corinthians that Paul is **trustworthy** because the Lord has kindly helped Paul have the wisdom he needs to answer the Corinthians' questions. When a person is trustworthy, it means you can trust that person. You can rely on that person, or depend on them. Use the same word for trustworthy or reliable that you have used in previous passages.

Paul advised the young ladies in the Corinthian church to not get married. Paul said this was because they were in a time of **crisis**, or **distress**. A crisis is a time of great suffering and trouble, such as persecution, war, or famine.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **crisis**. Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the married or engaged Corinthian people that they should not **separate** from each other. Another way to say this is that these people should not seek release or freedom from their marriage or their promise of marriage to each other. Married people should stay married, or engaged people should stay engaged. You can say that the Corinthian men and women should not try to release themselves from their promises to each other.

Paul tells the Corinthians that it is not a **sin** to get married. They are not doing anything wrong or bad if they choose to get married. Use the same word or phrase for sin that you have used throughout Corinthians. For more information, look up sin in the Master Glossary.

When Paul is talking to the believers in Corinth, he calls them **brothers**, or **brothers and sisters**. Paul is talking to the men and women in the church when he says this. Paul wants to remind the people in the church that God made them into one family now that they believed in Jesus. Use the same word for brothers, or brothers and sisters, that you have used before.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 7:25–31

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (13700983 KB)

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1 Corinthians 7:32–40

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 7:32–40 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:32–40 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.

5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:32–40 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This passage is the last one in a series of closely connected passages in chapter seven. The people in the church in Corinth had a lot of questions about marriage, separation, staying single, and marrying again after a husband or wife had died. They sent their questions to Paul in a letter. In the last four passages, and in this one, Paul has been answering all those questions from the Corinthians. In all of these last four passages, and in this one, Paul has connected each question to a big idea: life with God is bigger than our individual status or circumstances, or the things and people in the world around us. We do not need to try to change our circumstances. The world itself will soon come to an end. But life with God will go on forever. God loves us as we are, and we can serve God right where we are.

In the last passage, Paul told the Corinthians that Paul wanted to protect the Corinthians from worries and concerns in this world. Now in this passage, Paul continues with that idea. Paul says he wants the Corinthians to be free from worries. Paul says that a man who is not married can focus all his attention on the Lord. The Lord is the only one that man needs to please. But, Paul says, a married man has other things to think about. The married man needs to think about things in this world, and about how to keep his wife happy. The married man has his thinking divided and going in different directions. Paul repeats the idea with women who are not married. Paul talks about an unmarried woman—perhaps a widow—and about a virgin, or a young woman who has never been married. A woman who is single can focus all her attention on the Lord. Her goal is to please only the Lord with her body and her spirit. But, Paul says, a married woman has other things to think about. The married woman needs to think about things in this world, and about how to keep her husband happy. Paul finishes this part by showing that Paul cares for the Corinthians. Paul wants this advice to help the Corinthians, not to put limits on them. Paul wants them to live in a right way. Paul does not want them to have their thinking divided and going in different directions.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe a time when you, or someone you know, had divided thinking because you were thinking about many different things at once. In other words, other things distracted you and kept you from thinking about the most important thing. Maybe there were two or more things that you were focussed on or worried about at the same time. How did this divided thinking affect how you acted and felt? Pause this audio here.

Now Paul shifts to a different one of the questions from the Corinthians. This part is difficult to understand. We do not know what was happening in Corinth, and we do not know what the Corinthian believers had said to Paul in their letter. It seems that there were some people in the Corinthian church who were engaged to be married but had delayed getting married. We do not know why they had delayed getting married.

Paul says that a man in these circumstances should get married if he wants to get married. This man has an engagement, he has been waiting, and he feels like he should get married. Paul says if this man wants to get married, he should. This man is not sinning by getting married. Paul has said the same thing in the previous passages. Now, as Paul has also done in the previous passages, Paul wants to show the Corinthians a different view on the same question. Paul says that this same man could think about marriage differently. If the unmarried man is very clear in his own thinking, and is not feeling any pressure about getting married, it would be good for him not to marry. If this man has control of his sexual passion, and has made up his mind not to get married, then for this man it would be the right thing to not get married. Paul finishes this part when he says, as Paul did before, that the man who marries does a good thing, and the man who does not marry does even better.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What are the courtship and engagement customs like in your culture? What would happen if a man decided to not get married to a woman that he was engaged to? Pause this audio here.

Finally Paul moves to answer the last question from the Corinthians in this section of Paul's letter. This one is about a woman whose husband had died. Paul begins by reminding the Corinthians about something Paul has said several times in these passages. Married couples should stay married. Paul says a woman is bound, or tied, to her husband as long as her husband is alive. The tie of marriage is a commitment that lasts as long as both partners are alive. But, if the husband of a believing woman dies, Paul says that woman is free to marry anyone she wishes. But her new husband must be in the Lord, meaning that he must be a follower of Jesus. Then Paul repeats an idea that Paul has said several times in this part of Paul's letter. Paul says that in his judgment, or opinion, the widow will be happier if she stays unmarried, as she is. Paul also says something similar to another idea Paul has said before, but it may sound strange. Paul says, "I think I also have the Spirit of God." Paul does not actually have any doubts that the Holy Spirit lives in Paul and gives Paul power and wisdom. Paul is suggesting, in a somewhat joking way, that Paul's advice is good because Paul has the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit, living in Paul.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, if a woman's husband dies, what choices or expectations does the widow have for her future?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:32–40 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul tells the Corinthians that Paul wants the Corinthians to be free from concerns. If a believer is married, that person is thinking about pleasing God and their husband or wife. But if a believer is not married, that person can focus on God without other distractions.

In the second part: Paul is talking to men who are engaged, but who have delayed the marriage. Paul says that these people should go ahead and get married if they want to. They are not sinning. But, Paul says that it would be better if they stay single.

In the third part: Paul is talking about a believing woman whose husband dies. Paul says she is free to marry again, as long as the new husband is a believer. Paul closes by saying that Paul thinks the widow will be happier if she stays single. Paul suggests that his opinion is good because Paul has the Holy Spirit in him.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Unmarried man
- The Lord (Jesus or God)
- Married couple
- Unmarried woman
- Widow
- And the Spirit of God

The very beginning of this passage shows that it is closely connected to the last passage. The two passages really are together.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how do you show that two sections of a story or teaching are closely connected, and one is continuing from the other? Pause this audio here.

In the first part of this passage, Paul says he wants the Corinthians to be free from worries. In other words, Paul does not want the Corinthians to be worried about things all the time. Paul says that a man who is not married can focus all his attention on serving the Lord. The Lord is the only one who an unmarried man needs to please. But a married man has other things to think about. The married man needs to think about the things in this world, and about how to keep his wife happy. The married man has his thinking divided and going in different directions. Paul repeats the idea with women who are not married. Paul talks about an unmarried woman—perhaps a widow—and about a virgin, or a young woman who has never been married. A woman who is single can focus all her attention on how to please the Lord. That woman's goal is to please only the Lord with her body and her spirit. But a married woman has other things to think about. The married woman needs to think about the things in this world, and about how to keep her husband happy. Paul finishes this part by showing that Paul cares for the Corinthians. Paul wants this advice to help the Corinthians, not to put limits on them. Paul wants them to live in a right way. Paul does not want the Corinthians to have their thinking divided and going in different directions. When the Corinthians' thinking is divided, the Corinthians cannot focus on one thing completely.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how do you describe when a person feels their thinking is pulled in different directions, or when other things distract them from an important thing? How do you describe when a person focuses all their attention on one person or task? Remember the story you told in the previous step as you think about how you will describe someone thinking about different things or having divided thinking. Pause this audio here.

In the second part, Paul is now talking to men who are engaged, but who have delayed their marriage for some reason. These men may feel like they are making the women they are engaged to feel ashamed because they are not yet married. Paul says that a man in these circumstances should get married if the man wants to get married. This man has an engagement, he has been waiting and is passionate about the woman, and he feels like he should get married. Perhaps the woman is becoming older and will soon be past marriage age. So, Paul says if that man wants to get married, he should. That man is not sinning. Paul has said the same thing in the previous passages. Then, Paul shifts. Paul says that if the unmarried man is very clear in his own thinking, and is not feeling any pressure about getting married, it would be good for him not to marry. In other words, if this man has control of his sexual passion, and he has made up his mind not to get married, for this man it would be the right thing to not get married. Paul finishes this part saying, as Paul did before, that the man who marries does a good thing, and the man who does not marry does even better.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: The beginning of this second part shows that there is a new idea to talk about. In your language, how do you show that you are changing to a new idea in a story or teaching? Pause this audio here.

In the third part, Paul starts by reminding the Corinthians that married couples should stay married. Paul says a woman is bound, or tied, to her husband as long as her husband is alive. The tie of marriage is a commitment that lasts as long as both partners are alive. But, if the husband of a believing woman dies, Paul says that woman is free to marry anyone she wishes, as long as her new husband is a follower of Jesus. Then Paul says that in Paul's opinion, the widow will be happier if she stays unmarried. Paul suggests, in a somewhat joking way, that Paul's advice is good because Paul thinks he has the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit, living in him. Paul knows that he has the Spirit of God in him—Paul is not doubting or wondering if he does.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Share a story of a time when you said some words or a question, and everyone who heard you understood that your real meaning was the opposite of what you said. Is this way of talking normal in your culture? How do you use this way of talking? For example, do you do it to make people laugh, or to teach or scold someone? How will you show that Paul is saying that the Spirit of God gives Paul wisdom, just like the Spirit gives all believers wisdom? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:32–40 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Unmarried man
- The Lord (Jesus or God)
- Married couple
- Unmarried woman
- Widow
- And the Spirit of God

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first part, the person playing Paul could say to all the people that Paul wants them to be free from worries. The person playing Paul could point to the person playing Jesus and encourage all of the people to focus on Jesus. Now the person playing Paul could take the person playing the man who is not married, and show how the unmarried man can focus all his attention on the Lord, because the unmarried man has nothing else to distract him.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the unmarried man who is not distracted, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I love focusing on Jesus," or
- "Actually, I feel a little lonely sometimes, but I enjoy my ministry."

Next, the person playing Paul could bring forward the married couple. The person playing the married man could run back and forth between worshiping Jesus and talking to his wife. The wife could show that she needs money, or medical care, or has some other urgent need, and her husband has to decide how to care for her properly, while still trying to worship Jesus.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the husband, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "It was stressful running around trying to take care of everyone," or
- "I was disappointed that I did not have as much money to give to church, because my family was sick and we needed to buy medicine."

Next, the person playing Paul could repeat the scene, starting with the person playing a woman who is not married. This time, when it shifts to the married woman, she is the one running back and forth between her husband and Jesus. The married woman should show that she is struggling to decide how to care for her husband properly while still trying to worship Jesus.

At the end of this part, the person playing Paul should show that Paul cares for the Corinthians and that Paul is not trying to put limits on them. Paul could point back to the person playing Jesus and show that Paul wants the people not to have their thinking divided and going in two different directions.

In the second part, the drama shifts to a different group. The person playing Paul could bring forward a person playing an unmarried man and woman who are engaged. The people playing the couple could explain to the person playing Paul that they have a complicated question. For some reason, they have delayed getting married. The person playing Paul could lovingly show that they are free to get married if they want to. There is no problem.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the single man who got married, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am so happy that I can finally be married!" or
- "I feel relieved that I can honor God with our marriage after waiting so long."

Then, the person playing Paul could shift to show that he has a different idea to say to the engaged couple. The person playing Paul could ask the unmarried man, "How do you feel about not getting married? Are you peaceful in your thinking? Are you feeling any pressure about getting married? Is it a big struggle to deal with sexual temptation?" The person playing the unmarried man should show that all those things are okay. The unmarried man is not feeling worried about any of those things. The person playing Paul should then show that in that case, it would be the right thing to not get married. Finally, the person playing Paul should point to the couple who chose to get married and say that they made a good choice. Then, the person playing Paul should point to the couple who chose to not get married and say that they made an even better choice.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing a person who did not marry, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am happy. I do not need anything else," or
- "I am content to serve God freely."

In the third part, the drama shifts to a different group. The person playing Paul could start by reminding the whole group that married couples should stay married. Then, the person playing Paul could bring forward a married couple. The married couple could act like they are walking together, doing something in their normal life, when suddenly the husband dies. Now, the person playing the widow could go to Paul and ask Paul's advice. The person playing Paul could point to the unmarried men in the group and show that the widow is free to marry any of them, as long as her new husband is a follower of Jesus.

Then, the person playing Paul could shift to show that Paul has a different idea to say to the widow. Then Paul could say to the widow that, in Paul's opinion, the widow will be happier if she stays unmarried. Finally, the person playing Paul could point to the person playing the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit. The person playing Paul could show the person playing the widow that the Spirit of God lives inside Paul and has given Paul this wisdom.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the widow who got married again, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am so thankful that God gave me a new husband to take care of me," or
- "I feel relieved that God has seen my needs and answered my prayers."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 7:32–40 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul tells the Corinthians that Paul wants them to feel **free from anxiety**, or not to be worried about a difficult situation.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "free from anxiety or worry." Pause this audio here.

Paul says it is easier for people who are not married to serve the **Lord** than for those who are married. We do not know if Paul is talking about serving Jesus or God. Either one could be correct. Use the same word or phrase for Lord as you used in previous passages. For more information on Lord, refer to the Master Glossary.

Paul says it is easier for an **unmarried woman** and a **virgin** to serve the Lord than a married woman. When Paul says unmarried woman, Paul is talking about a woman who was not married at the time. Perhaps she was a widow. The virgin was a young woman who had never married. Use the same words or phrases for unmarried woman and for virgin as you used in previous passages.

Paul says that an unmarried woman or a virgin can devote her whole self—her physical body and her **spirit**—to serve the Lord. The spirit is in the invisible, inner part of a person—the part of the person that has a relationship with God. Use the same word or phrase for "spirit of a person" as you used in previous passages. Look up spirit of a person in the Master Glossary for more information.

Paul says that a woman is **bound to**, or tied to, her husband as long as that woman's husband lives. Use the same word or phrase for being bound to a husband or wife as you used in the previous passage.

A widow who is a believer is free to marry again, as long as she marries a man who is **in the Lord**. If a person is "in the Lord," he believes and follows Jesus.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use to say a person is "in the Lord." Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the Corinthians that in Paul's **judgment**, a widow would be happier if she did not marry again. Paul is saying that this is Paul's **opinion** on the matter. Use the same word or phrase for judgment, when it means opinion, as you used in previous passages.

Paul ends the passage by suggesting to the Corinthians that they can trust Paul's judgment because Paul has the **Spirit of God**. This is another way of talking about the Holy Spirit. It is a different way of saying the same thing. Use the same words or phrases for Spirit of God that you have used in previous passages. Look up Holy Spirit in the Master Glossary for more information.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 7:32-40

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul has finished his teaching about issues that had to do with marriage and sexual relationships. Paul now starts a new topic. This is the topic of eating food that is offered to idols. This passage is the beginning of several that will have to do with this topic.

It seems that the believers in Corinth had asked Paul a question about eating food that people had offered to idols.

It is important to understand a little bit about the situation in Corinth. The people in Corinth—those people who did not know Jesus—worshiped many different gods. Each of these gods had a temple. A temple was a place where there was a statue of this god—an idol. People would go to these temples on special days to eat with their friends.

Stop here and look at a picture of one of the temples in Corinth. Also, look at a picture of one of the idols that people worshiped. Pause this audio here.

While the people were eating and drinking, they would praise the god whose temple they were in. People would also drink a lot of alcohol. And probably, people also did sexual sin in these temples. Some men and women lived in the temples, and other people came to have sexual relations with them. The people thought that if they had sexual relations with someone in the temple, something good would happen to them. So, because of all these bad things, we can understand that Paul would have told the believers earlier that they should not visit these temples!

Stop here and discuss: Tell a story about a worship place in your community—not a Christian worship place, but a place where people worship other gods, or spirits. What kind of things do people do in this place? Pause this audio here.

So, Paul had earlier told the believers in Corinth that they should not go to the temples of these idols. But people also went to temples just to be with their friends. It was a normal place to go and have a meal together. And so some believers had complained to Paul. They wanted to go to the temples. Not because they wanted to worship an idol, but because they wanted to be with their friends, or because they wanted to have a good meal.

These believers were very arrogant. Most likely, they had said to Paul, "We know many spiritual things! We know that there are no other gods besides God. Idols are nothing. It should be totally fine to eat this meat! We are not worshiping an idol when we are in the temple—we are just eating! We have a very strong faith! People who still think that an idol really is a god have a weak faith. But we are not like those weak people!"

Stop here and discuss: In your community, do people offer food to idols, or to spirits? What does it mean if people eat this food? How do different believers feel about this food? Pause this audio here.

Paul agrees that idols are nothing. But even so, Paul tells the proud believers that they should not go into the temples. These proud believers themselves know that an idol is nothing. But they should think about other

believers as well. It is not so important whether these proud believers have much spiritual knowledge. It is much more important that they love the other believers, and that they make sure that these other believers also keep growing in their faith!

Most believers would have worshiped idols their whole lives, before they became Christians. Some of them may still struggle to really believe that idols are not gods. If they see other believers going into the temple, they may want to go as well. They feel that it is wrong to go, but they go because they see the proud believers go. Then they feel guilty and confused. They may begin to worship idols again. The behavior of the proud believers will then have made other believers do sin!

Stop here and discuss: Can you tell a story about some habits from another faith that people in your Christian community do not agree about whether it is okay or not to do? Pause this audio here.

Because the proud believers are not caring for their weaker brothers and sisters, they sin. They sin against the weaker brothers and sisters, but this is also a sin against Christ.

Paul says that Paul himself will never want to eat meat again, if this would make any other believer sin!

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has one part.

In this part, Paul says that the proud believers in Corinth should not eat food that was offered to idols, because this harmed some of the other believers.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Christ
- God
- The people in Corinth who worship idols
- The believers who think it is okay to eat food that is offered to idols
- And the believers who think it is wrong to eat food that is offered to idols

Paul begins by saying that Paul is now going to talk about food that had been offered to idols.

Paul and the believers in Corinth know that everybody has knowledge. The proud believers in Corinth had probably said that all of them knew many spiritual things. And one of these spiritual things that they knew was that idols are nothing.

Paul agrees that, indeed, the believers know this. But knowing some spiritual thing is not helpful if it makes you arrogant! The believers in Corinth were very proud that they knew spiritual things. They were so proud that they were puffed up: as if someone had blown air inside of them, and now they were twice as big. But it was just air! It only made them *look* more important, but they were not *really* more important. Paul used these same words about being puffed up, or arrogant, earlier in his letter to describe the arrogant believers.

Paul says that it is much better to love another person than to be arrogant that you have spiritual knowledge. If you love another person, you are helping the other person to have more faith. You are helping them to do more of what God wants. Paul uses the special language of "building up." Think about a house that is not very big or strong. You can "build up" a house so that it becomes a better house.

Stop here and discuss: How will you say in your language that if you love someone, you will build that person up, like a person builds a house so that it is strong? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that these people who think they know spiritual things do not actually know enough. They think they know things, but they do not! They do not know that it is much more important to love God than to have spiritual knowledge. Because if you love God, then God knows *you!* That is much more important than that *you* know spiritual things!

So, about food that is offered to idols, Paul says that we know that an idol is nothing. This means that Paul knows it, and the proud believers in Corinth know it as well. They know that an idol is just a piece of wood or metal. The god that this idol represents does not exist. This is something that the proud believers have said to Paul, and Paul agrees that this is true. Paul also agrees that there is no other god besides God. Other people may say that there are many gods and lords or masters in heaven or on earth, but Christians know that there is only one God. This is God the father, who created everything. This is the God we live for. And there is only one Lord, who is Jesus Christ. Christ created everything for God. We live because Christ gave us life.

Stop here and discuss: What kind of things do people in your community, who are not Christians, worship? When you are talking together about these things that people worship, what do you call them? When you say that you worship the one true God, how do you talk about him to show that he is the true God? Pause this audio here.

So, Paul knows this, and the proud believers know this. But not all people know this. Some people are so used to believing that idols really are gods, that they still believe this a little bit. If they eat food that was offered to an idol, they immediately think about the idol. They feel guilty about eating the food. They are not like the strong believers, who are very sure that idols are nothing.

Paul says that food cannot bring us closer to God. What we eat or not eat has nothing to do with whether or not God accepts us. This might have been something that the proud believers had said, and Paul agrees with them. But, says Paul, if we *do not* eat food that is offered to idols we are not lesser Christians than people who do eat. And if we *do* eat this food, we are not better Christians than people who do not eat! The proud believers should not think that they were better Christians than others because they ate this food.

Paul says that it is very important that we do not harm our brothers and sisters. The proud believers think that they are free to eat food offered to idols. But what they are doing could really harm the other believers—those who are not so strong and powerful as the proud believers.

If these weaker believers would see some other believers eat a meal in a temple, they may want to go and do the same thing, especially because those believers who still go to the temple are probably wealthy and important people. The other believers would very much want to follow the example of the strong and powerful people. But unlike these strong and powerful people, the so-called weak people are not completely sure that idols are nothing. They still feel that it is a sin to eat food that is offered to idols. So, they do not want to go into the temple, but they see other believers go into the temple, and then they do it as well. This makes them feel guilty and confused. It could make them begin worshiping idols again. So when the proud believers do what they want to do, they become a stumbling block, or a thing that causes the weak believers to stumble and fall, or sin. The proud believers think they know so much. But because of what they do, some weaker believers may begin to sin. Christ has died to save these people, but then these proud believers destroy them!

When the proud believers are making the weaker believers sin, these proud believers themselves are doing sin. This sin hurts the other believers, but it also hurts Christ! Christ has died for these people, but these proud believers are undoing Christ's work.

Paul says that Paul himself would rather never eat meat again than make another believer sin!

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

You may want to act out or use objects or drawings to show the situation that Paul is talking about in this passage. The proud believers go into the temple of the idols and eat the meals there. They say that this is fine, because idols are nothing. There are no other gods apart from God. Some other believers see this. These believers become confused. They think it is not good to go into these temples, but they think that they should do the same thing as these proud believers do. Some indeed go into the temple. They then begin to worship

these idols again. They even turn away from God. Show that God is very angry with these proud believers because they made the other believers sin.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has one part.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Christ
- God
- The people in Corinth who worship idols
- The believers who think it is okay to eat food that is offered to idols
- And the believers who think it is wrong to eat food that is offered to idols

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Let Paul stand while the people in Corinth listen to Paul. Some people are the proud believers, and some other people can be the so-called weak believers.

Act out that Paul is addressing the believers. Paul says that he wants to talk about eating food that is offered to idols. Paul says that we all know many spiritual things. But knowing spiritual things is not good if it makes you arrogant. It is much better to love other people. Then you help those people to grow! People who think that they know so much do not know the most important thing. They do not know that it is more important that we love God. Because then God knows us!

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the proud Corinthians, "What are you thinking?" People may answer things like:

- "I am offended! Why does Paul say that we are arrogant? We really know so many spiritual things!"

Act out that Paul continues speaking. Paul says: "You proud believers are right when you say that idols are nothing. It is true that only God is there, and that there are no other gods besides God. Even though many other people think that there are many gods and lords, both in heaven as well as on earth, we do not think that. We know there is only one God, who is our father. And we know that there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ. God made everything through Jesus, and we live for God and because Jesus saved us."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the proud Corinthians, "What are you thinking?" People may answer things like:

- "Yes, Paul is right, there is only one God. I hope that Paul will tell us that therefore it is okay to go into the temples of the idols and eat the meals there!"

Ask the people playing the weaker believers, "What are you thinking?" People may say things like:

- "What Paul says sounds right. I know that there is only one God. But still, I sometimes wonder about all these other gods. Maybe they do exist. Or not?"

Act out that Paul continues speaking. Paul says: "But not everybody knows this so very well. Some people have worshiped idols for a very long time. When they eat meat that is offered to idols, they think they are in fact worshiping the idol. Then they feel guilty about it."

Ask the people playing the weaker believers, "What are you thinking?" People may say things like:

- "That is true. I am afraid that if I eat food that is offered to idols, God will think that I am worshiping these idols again. God may be angry with me."

Act out that Paul continues speaking. Paul says: "The food that we eat has nothing to do with whether God accepts us or not. We are not bad Christians if we do not eat the food. And if we do eat the food, this does not make us better Christians. We may think that we are free to do something, but we have to be careful! We may harm our brothers and sisters by doing this."

Ask the people playing the stronger believers, "What are you thinking?" People may say things like:

- "I do not agree. I think we are much better Christians than those weaker believers! Our faith is so strong that we know that idols are not real gods. I think that God must like us a lot better than he likes those other people!"

Ask the people playing the weaker believers, "What are you thinking?" People may say things like:

- "I am so relieved! I am glad that God does not think that we are bad Christians because we are not bold enough to eat food offered to idols."

Act out that Paul says that if a weak believer will see another believer—someone who thinks he has much spiritual knowledge—go into the temple of an idol to have a meal, that believer would become very confused. The believer will also want to eat food that was offered to an idol, even though he feels it is wrong. Then the believer who thinks he knows so much will be the reason that God will have to punish the other believer. Christ had died to save this believer, but now he is no longer saved!

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the stronger believers, "What are you thinking?" People may say things like:

- "This sounds quite serious. Maybe I was wrong. I do not really want to harm my brothers and sisters!"

Ask the people playing the weaker believers, "What are you thinking?" People may say things like:

- "I am really encouraged that Paul is helping us! I hope that these strong believers will stop thinking that we are not good. I hope that they will love us and help us."

Act out that Paul continues speaking. Paul says: "If you do this, you sin against your brothers and sisters, because you confuse them. And because you do this, you sin against Christ. And so, I would rather not ever eat meat again than make one of my brothers or sisters sin because of what I eat!"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you thinking?" People may answer things like:

- "I really hope that the proud believers will realize that food is not important at all! They should stop doing things that will harm the other believers. I hope they will take my example!"

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

An **idol** is an object that people make in order to worship a god. The object reminds the people about some characteristics of this god. People worship this idol as if it is this god itself. God had forbidden his people to ever worship an idol.

Stop here and look at a picture of one of the idols that the people in Corinth worshiped. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss what word you will use in your translation for an **idol**. The word idol is in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

The non-believers in Corinth **offered** food to idols. These people did this to make these gods happy. Of course, the idols could not really eat the food. But the people pretended that the idols ate the food. After that, the people themselves ate the food, or gave it to other people. The people considered this food special. People thought that if they ate such food, the gods would do something good for them.

In Corinth, people especially killed animals and offered the meat of these animals to their idols.

Pause here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for food that is sacrificed, or offered, to idols. Pause this audio here.

Paul talks about **knowledge**. Paul means spiritual knowledge. If you have spiritual knowledge, you know spiritual things. Paul began his letter by saying that God had given the people in Corinth much knowledge. Use the same word or phrase as you have used there.

Paul says that knowledge puffs up, but **love builds up**. If you think you have much spiritual knowledge, you become proud and arrogant. But if you humbly love other people, which means that you want what is best for them, then you help other people to grow strong in their faith. You help them to become better Christians. Use the same phrases for "puffs up" or "makes arrogant" as you have used in previous passages. In contrast, love "builds up." Remember that when someone loves someone else, they want what is best for them. If you cannot talk about the ideas of knowledge or love *doing* something, you may talk about what happens to people when they have knowledge and when they love someone.

Stop here and discuss how you will say that knowledge "puffs up" or "makes someone arrogant," and that love "builds up." Pause this audio here.

Paul says that God **knows** the person who loves God. God recognizes and has a relationship with the person who loves God.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will say that God knows the people who love God. Pause this audio here.

Paul says there are many so-called gods and lords. Paul says that these beings are "so-called" gods and lords. He means they are not really gods, but people think they are gods. A **lord** is someone who is a master over other people. In this case, it means another word for a god. A **god** means a spirit, or a being that people think has some power over people or over some part of nature. For instance, the people in Corinth worshiped one particular god who they thought had the power to heal people from sickness. They also worshiped a female god who they thought had the power to give people children.

Stop here and discuss what word you will use in your language for **gods**, and for **lords**. For more information, look up gods in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that there is only one Lord. That Lord is Jesus Christ. Use the same word for **Christ** and **Lord** as you have used in other passages. The words Christ and Lord are in the Master Glossary.

Paul says that even if people think there are gods in **heaven** and on earth, we know that there is only one God, our Father. Heaven is the place where God lives.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word you will use for **heaven**. Heaven is in the Master Glossary. If you have translated this word in another book of the Bible, use that word here. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that some believers have a **weak conscience**. A conscience is a guilty feeling that people have inside. Paul means that these people are not so sure that eating food offered to idols is fine, like the proud believers are. They are not so strong and convinced about what is the right thing to do. It would be easy for someone else to make them do the wrong thing. Later, Paul calls them weak believers. Paul does not call them weak because Paul looks down on them. It is the proud believers who are looking down on these people.

Stop here and discuss how you will describe these believers. The word conscience is in the Master Glossary. You do not have to use a word for conscience if it does not fit here. Instead, you could describe what conscience is. Pause this audio here.

When believers with a weak conscience do something that they think is wrong, they defile their conscience, or make themselves ashamed or unclean, which means that they are impure or unfit for service to God.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will say that the believers' weak conscience is defiled. See the Master Glossary for clean and unclean to get more information about being defiled, or unclean. Pause this audio here.

The proud believers in Corinth wanted to eat meals in the **temples** of the idols. A temple is a place where people worship a god or an idol. Temples in Corinth were quite large and impressive. There were many temples in the city to different gods. Paul has talked about the temple earlier in his letter, but then he was talking about the temple of the one true God.

Stop here and discuss what word you will use for a temple for an idol. The word temple is in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the proud believers that they should not become a stumbling block for the believers with a weak conscience. "Stumbling block" is special language that literally means a stone that people trip over. However, Paul uses it here to mean something that offends people but that also causes them to turn away from God in a way that destroys them. Use the same word or phrase for stumbling block that you used earlier in chapter one of Paul's letter to the Corinthians.

If the proud believers do things that harm other believers, that is **sin**. To sin against Christ means that you are rebelling against Christ. You are doing something that is the opposite of what Christ wants. If you **sin against** another person, you are not doing to that person what Christ wants, and the result is that the other person gets hurt. Use the same word for sin that you have used in other passages. The word sin is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss how you will say in your language that the proud believers in Corinth were sinning against the other believers. Pause this audio here.

Paul talks about **brothers, or brothers and sisters**. Paul means spiritual brothers and sisters—in other words, the other believers. Use the same words as you have used in earlier passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one part but you liked the way a different group member told another part. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 9:1-14

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 9:1-14 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 9:1-14 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

In the previous section, Paul wanted to convince the Corinthians that they always should think about the spiritual needs of their fellow believers. Eating meat that people had first offered to idols was not a problem in itself. But if some believers thought that it was not good to eat this meat, then the other believers should also not eat it, even if they themselves did not think that it was a problem!

Paul will continue to talk about this again later, but first Paul is going to use himself as an example. In the next few sections, Paul will explain that Paul has the freedom to do what Paul thinks is right. Paul does not have to follow a set of rules. But even though Paul has that freedom, he will not use it. Paul also has some rights, because Paul is an apostle. When Paul lived in Corinth, Paul had the right that the church in Corinth helped him with his daily needs. But Paul did not use that right. By giving himself as an example, Paul wants the people in Corinth to do the same thing.

Stop here and listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 9:1-14 in the easiest-to-understand translation. Pause this audio here.

In this section, Paul explains that Paul had the right to receive support from the church in Corinth, just like the other apostles do. Paul ends by saying that Paul did not use this right.

In this section, Paul is asking the people in Corinth many questions. Paul already knows the answers to these questions, but Paul asks these questions to make the people in Corinth think. Paul is pretending to have a conversation with people who think that Paul is not really an apostle.

But Paul says that he really is an apostle. Even if some people in other places would say that Paul was not an apostle, the people in Corinth should know better. The people in Corinth have become followers of Jesus because of Paul. This proves that Paul is an apostle.

So, because Paul is indeed an apostle, this means that Paul has the same right as other apostles. An apostle has the right to get financial support from the church. Some apostles are taking their wives with them when they travel. But Paul, and another apostle named Barnabas, do not make use of these rights. Actually, Paul was not married.

Paul then explains the reason *why* an apostle has the right to get financial support from the church. Paul uses a couple of examples from normal life. A soldier who fights in an army gets paid for fighting. A farmer who plants a garden gets to eat the fruit of the garden. Someone who has sheep or goats gets to drink the milk of these animals. All these examples are about people who do work, and who enjoy the benefit of their work. It would be very strange, and unfair, if these people do this work but do not get paid for it!

Stop here and discuss: What examples from your own daily life would *you* give to show that someone who works also gets to enjoy the results of their work? Pause this audio here.

These are examples from normal life, but even the law of God, which God gave his people through Moses, says that a person who works has the right to receive payment for their work. God had made a law that if an animal was working for a farmer, the farmer should allow the animal to eat while it was working. Paul says that God was not just thinking about animals when God made this law. God was already thinking about people.

Paul compares himself with a farmer. Paul has told the people about Jesus; that is like sowing spiritual seed. In return, the people should support Paul; that is Paul's harvest. It seems that the people in Corinth are indeed supporting some *other* people who are preaching. If they support other people, they should certainly support Paul, because Paul was the first one who told them about Jesus.

But then Paul says something very unexpected. Paul says that Paul did not *want* the people in Corinth to give him money! Paul says that he has endured hardships so that nothing would get in the way of the gospel.

We need to understand a little bit of the culture in Corinth now. The non-Christian people in Corinth liked good speakers. They even had competitions where people would give speeches. If someone was very good at giving speeches, then a wealthy person would often give the speaker food, or money, or other things. The wealthy person would take care of the speaker in everything, so that the speaker did not have to work for his food.

So, when people became Christians, they expected that preachers like Paul would also want to get this support from a wealthy person. But Paul did not allow anyone to pay him. Paul paid for his own food, room, and clothes. We know from other passages in the Bible that Paul earned his money by making tents. This was hard and difficult work. Some wealthy people had probably offered to pay Paul, but Paul refused that pay. These wealthy people were probably offended when Paul refused payment.

Stop here and discuss: In your Christian community, do you pay people who work for the church, or not? What are the advantages if a church pays the church workers? What are the disadvantages? Pause this audio here.

For the rich people in Corinth, it was very strange that Paul was working with his hands. These people looked down on people who were working with their hands. Therefore, they did not have so much respect for Paul.

Later, Paul will tell the believers more about the reason why Paul did not want to accept people's money, and why Paul worked with his own hands.

But first, Paul gives two more examples from workers in God's temple, and from Jesus' teachings, to show that people who work for God deserve to be paid.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 9:1-14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul argues that Paul really is an apostle. Paul also explains that someone who preaches the gospel has the right to receive financial support.

In the second part: Paul says that Paul did not use his right to receive support.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Jesus
- The other apostles, the Lord's brothers, and the apostle Peter
- Barnabas
- A soldier in an army
- A person who plants a vineyard
- A person who owns sheep and goats
- A person who serves in the temple
- And people who proclaim the gospel

In this section, it is as if Paul is performing a drama in front of the Corinthians. Paul pretends that Paul is defending himself in a court against some people who say that Paul is not an apostle. Paul is defending himself by asking the people in Corinth some questions. The first question Paul asks is, "Am I not a free person?" Paul probably means to say that he is free from the law: Paul does not have to follow a set of rules in order for God to accept Paul.

Then Paul asks: "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?" Paul expects the people in Corinth to answer all these questions with, "Yes, Paul, you are free. Yes, Paul, you have seen our Lord, and yes, we believe in Jesus because of your work."

Another way to think of this is to pretend that some people have first said, "Paul is not free, Paul is not an apostle," and that Paul is saying, "That is not true: I *am* free, I *am* an apostle."

It is helpful to understand that the other apostles, like Peter, had spent a lot of time with Jesus when Jesus was still on earth. But Paul only became a believer after Jesus had already gone back to heaven. For this reason, some people may have said that Paul was not really an apostle. An apostle is someone who directly got his authority from Jesus. But we can read in the book of Acts that Jesus did appear to Paul a few times. And Jesus did indeed give Paul the authority to preach.

Stop here and discuss: Imagine that someone has said that you are not the person you say that you are. Imagine that you are in a courtroom defending yourself and proving that you are the person you say you are. Think about how you would say that indeed you are a father, or a mother, or a person from your country. In your language, do you ask questions to defend yourself when of course you already know the answer? What is the best way for you to translate all these questions that Paul is asking here in order to prove that Paul is an apostle and has authority as an apostle? Pause this audio here.

Even if some people in other places would say that Paul was not an apostle, the people in Corinth should know better. They have become followers of Jesus because of Paul. This proves that Paul is an apostle. Paul uses the image of a seal. A seal is a small object from stone or metal with a picture carved into it. Every important person had their own seal. After an important person had written a letter, they put a little bit of soft clay or wax on the letter. Then they pressed their seal on this soft clay. This printed the picture that was on the seal in the clay. The clay would become hard, and the picture stayed. Everybody who then saw the letter could see the picture of the seal. Then they knew that the letter was official, and that the letter really came from the person who said he wrote the letter.

Stop here and look at a picture of a seal, and a seal on a document. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss: In your community, how do you know that something is real, or official? How will you say that the fact that the people in Corinth are believing in Jesus is proof that Paul is an apostle? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that this is the way that Paul defends himself if people question Paul's authority. If people will say that Paul is not an apostle, then Paul will tell them the things Paul just said.

So, because Paul is indeed an apostle, this means that Paul has the same rights as other apostles. Paul has the right to get food and drink. Paul has the right to take a Christian wife with him when he travels. Some other apostles are indeed doing this. Paul mentions apostles, the Lord's brothers, and Peter. The Lord's brothers and Peter are examples of apostles. Some translations use Peter's Greek name, which is Cephas. The Lord's brothers means half-brothers of Jesus—children of Jesus' mother Mary and her husband Joseph. Some of them had also become apostles.

But Paul, and also another apostle named Barnabas, do not get paid by some rich believers. Instead, they work hard to pay for their own food.

Paul uses three examples from daily life to show how unfair it would be if a person who works would not get paid for his work.

Stop here and do this activity. Act out these three examples:

- First, act out a soldier who is fighting in a war. At the end of the war, the soldier gets paid.
Pause this audio here.
- Second, act out a farmer who has fruit trees. The farmer is taking care of the trees and plucking the fruit. At the end, the farmer eats from the fruit. Pause this audio here.
- Third, act out a man who has sheep or goats. The man takes care of the animals. The man milks the animals. In the end, the man drinks the milk. Pause this audio here.

If you want, you can also act out your own examples! Pause this audio here.

Paul is giving these examples in the form of questions. This is Paul's way of making the people in Corinth see how absurd it is if people do not get paid for their work.

Paul then says that even the law of God says the same thing. Paul mentions a law that God had made for farmers. This law made sure that farmers took care of their animals well. When a farmer had harvested his grain, the farmer would spread out the stalks of grain on the ground and then let an ox walk back and forth on top of the stalks. An ox is a very strong animal. It is a bull that is castrated.

The ox would pull a heavy piece of wood with sharp pieces of iron or stones on it. This piece of wood pressed on the grain, and this separated the grain from the stalks. The farmer could then easily collect the grain. This work is called threshing.

Sometimes a farmer did not want the ox to eat some of the grain as the ox was walking over it. The farmer would then tie the mouth of the ox shut. But God had made a law that said that the farmer should not do this. The farmer should allow the ox to eat from the grain as the ox was threshing it. The ox deserved to get paid for his work!

Stop here and, if needed, look at a picture of an ox threshing the grain. Look at a picture of an ox that is muzzled. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that God was not just concerned about animals when God made this law. If God already cared enough about animals to make this law, God certainly wants people to get paid for their work as well. Paul means that God made this law for the benefit of the apostles, and for the other people who work for God.

Just as an *animal* has the right to eat when that animal works, *people* have the right to eat when they work. Paul uses an example from a farmer now. Paul says that a person who is ploughing and threshing does this because the person knows that later he will eat from the harvest. Ploughing and threshing are jobs that a farmer does on the farmer's land. Ploughing means that the farmer is turning over the soil. This is making the soil soft, and is needed before the farmer can sow his seed. A farmer would usually do this by having a pair of oxen pull a plough, which is an instrument that people made of wood and iron. Threshing is the job of separating the grains from the stalks.

Stop here and, if needed, look at a picture of a farmer ploughing his land. Pause this audio here.

Paul is like a farmer, because Paul has sown spiritual seed among the people in Corinth. This means that Paul has told the people about Jesus. Because of this, Paul has the right to expect that the people in Corinth pay Paul

back by supporting him financially. That would be Paul's harvest. Other people who preach in Corinth are expecting the people in Corinth to pay them. Paul has more right than these people to get paid. This is because Paul was the first one who told the people in Corinth about Jesus.

Paul is again saying these things in the form of questions. This is Paul's way of making the people see that Paul is right.

So far in this passage, Paul really did his best to convince the people in Corinth that Paul is an apostle, and that Paul therefore has the right that the believers in Corinth support Paul. By now, Paul's readers would probably all agree with Paul! But then, Paul says something completely unexpected. Paul says that Paul has not used this right. Paul means that when he lived in Corinth, Paul did not ask the people for money. Or, if people offered Paul money, he did not accept it. Instead, Paul worked hard for his own food, which was difficult. Paul endured this difficulty because he did not want to make it more difficult for people to believe the gospel.

Stop here and do this activity: Can you tell a story about someone who tells other people things for money? Like someone who gets money to tell other people about a good hospital, or about a big shop. How do you feel differently about that person if you know that a person is paid for what he says, or that he is not paid? Pause this audio here.

Paul then goes back and gives two more examples to show that apostles and preachers should be paid. The first example comes from the worship in the temple of God. God had made a law that the people who worked in the temple got to eat from the food that people brought to the temple. This food was offered to God, but not all of it. Part of the food was for the people who worked in the temple.

Stop here and do this activity, if you like: Act out that some people are bringing an animal to the temple to sacrifice this to God. Act out that the people who work in the temple offer it to God. Act out that they take some of the meat of the animal and eat it themselves. Pause this audio here.

The second example comes from Jesus. At one time, Jesus had told his disciples to go and preach to the people. Jesus had told the disciples that they should not take any money or provisions with them. Jesus meant that the people who would listen to the disciples would give the disciples what they needed. Jesus said that a worker had the right to be paid.

And so, says Paul, these two examples show that God says people who are working for him deserve to be paid.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 9:1-14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Jesus
- The other apostles, the Lord's brothers, and Peter
- Barnabas
- A soldier in an army
- A person who plants a vineyard
- A person who owns sheep and goats
- A person who serves in the temple
- And people who proclaim the gospel

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Set up the room as if it is a courtroom. Paul is there, and some people who accuse Paul are there. The people in Corinth are listening to the accusations.

Some actors will accuse Paul that he is not an apostle. They can keep saying things like, "Paul, you are not a real apostle," or, "Paul, you do not deserve that we support you financially."

Paul then defends himself. Act out that Paul says that Paul really is an apostle, and that the people in Corinth should especially know that.

Act out that Paul says that Paul has the right to bring along a believing wife, just as the other apostles do.

Act out that Paul questions why only Paul and Barnabas need to work for their own food.

Pause the drama.

Ask the actor playing Paul, "What are you thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want people to know that I really am an apostle," or
- "I hope that the people understand that I have the same rights as the other apostles have," or
- "I want to teach people that even though I have rights, I give them up for the sake of other people."

Act out that Paul gives three examples from daily life to show that people have the right to enjoy the benefit of their work.

Pause the drama.

Ask the actors playing the people in Corinth, "What are you thinking?" The people may answer things like:

- "Paul is right. These examples show that everybody who works normally gets paid."

Act out that Paul gives the example from the law of God about the ox that is threshing grain. Act out that Paul says he has the right to receive a material harvest from the people in Corinth.

Pause the drama.

Ask the actors playing the people in Corinth, "What are you thinking?" The people may answer things like:

- "Indeed, Paul has blessed us so much by telling us about Jesus! It would be really good if we would help Paul, so that Paul does not need to work so much with his hands. Then Paul would have more time to preach!" or
- "Paul is right. Paul deserves to be paid even more than the other preachers, because Paul is the first one who told us about Jesus," or
- "But Paul did not want to get payment when we offered it to Paul! I was quite offended by that. What kind of preacher is that, who works with his hands?"

Act out that Paul, very unexpectedly, says that he has not used his right to receive material support. Paul rather wants to endure hardship, so that nothing will get in the way of the gospel.

Pause the drama.

Ask the actors playing the people in Corinth, "What are you thinking?" People may answer things like:

- "What? I was not expecting this! I thought that Paul was going to say that we should start supporting him. But now Paul says that he does not even want this!" or
- "Oh, so Paul did not want to accept our payment because he thought it would make it more difficult for people to believe Paul. I hope Paul is going to explain a bit more about that."

Ask the actor playing Paul, "What are you feeling?" People may answer things like:

- "I really want people to understand that I have the right to ask for support. But even though I have this right, I do not ask for their support. The gospel is too important for money to get in the way!" or
- "I hope that people are understanding that I am setting an example for them."

Act out that Paul gives the example from the temple worship, and the example from Jesus.

Pause the drama.

Ask the actors playing the people in Corinth, "What are you thinking?" People may answer things like:

- "We understand now that God made clear that people who work for God have the right to receive support. We should make sure that the apostles have everything they need," or
- "So, Paul has the right to receive support. But Paul just said that he did not want to take our money. I am curious what Paul is going to say next."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 9:1-14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

In this passage, Paul wants to tell the people in Corinth that Paul really is an **apostle**. An apostle is someone who received a special authority from Jesus to speak on Jesus' behalf. Use the same word for apostle as you have used in other passages. The word apostle is in the Master Glossary.

In this passage, Paul sometimes talks about Jesus, and sometimes about **the Lord**. When Paul says "the Lord," Paul means the Lord Jesus. Use the same word as you have used for Lord in other passages and remember that Lord is in the Master Glossary.

Paul says that Paul is like a person in a court of law who is defending themselves when people are **judging**, or examining, him. This sort of judgment is when people ask many questions, or investigate someone to find out if they are telling the truth. Use the same word for this kind of judgment as you used in 1 Corinthians chapter 4:3-4.

Paul says that the Corinthians are a **seal**, or guarantee, that Paul is an apostle, like a seal guarantees that a letter is from a certain person. A seal is a small object from stone or metal, with a picture carved into it. Every important person had their own seal. After an important person had written a letter, they put a little bit of soft clay or wax on the letter. Then they pressed their seal on this soft clay. This printed the picture that was on the seal into the clay. The clay would become hard, and the picture stayed. Everybody who then saw the letter could see the picture of the seal. Then they knew that the letter was official, and that the letter really came from the person who said he wrote the letter.

Stop here and look at a picture of a seal again, if needed, and a seal on a document. Discuss how you will translate that the Corinthians are a seal that proves Paul is an apostle. Pause this audio here.

Paul uses several examples from normal life to show that people who work get to enjoy the results of their work. One of these examples is that of a farmer who has a **vineyard**. A vineyard is a garden with grape trees. The fruit of these trees are called grapes. People eat grapes fresh, or dry them in the sun. Once the grapes are dried out, they are called raisins and can be kept for a long time. People also extract the juice from grapes to make an alcoholic drink called wine.

Stop here and discuss what word you will use for **vineyard**. If needed, look at a picture of a grape tree, and of a vineyard. The word vineyard is in the Master Glossary. Use the same word as you have used in other books of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

The other example that Paul uses is about someone who takes care of a **flock**. A flock is a group of sheep or goats. People kept sheep and goats in order to use the hair of these animals to make clothing, to eat the meat of these animals, and also to drink the milk that these animals produced.

If needed, stop here and look at a picture of a flock of sheep and goats. Discuss what word you will use here. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that not just Paul's own human **authority** or power, but also the **law of Moses**, tells us that people who work deserve to be paid. The law here means the law, or rules to live by, that God has given the Israelites, or Jewish people, through Moses. Use the same word for authority that you have used in previous passages, and see authority in the Master Glossary for more information.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for "law of Moses." For more information, refer to law in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

The law of Moses says that a farmer should not **muzzle** an **ox**. An ox is a very strong animal. An ox is a bull that is castrated.

Stop here and, if needed, look at a picture of an ox threshing the grain. Look at a picture of an ox that is muzzled. Talk about what words you will use for **ox** and **muzzle**. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that people who work in the **temple** also get to eat from the food in the temple. Paul is talking about the temple of God in Jerusalem. The temple is the place where the Israelites worshiped God. The people in Corinth would never have seen the temple in Jerusalem, but they have seen other temples. Use the same word for temple as you have used in other books for the temple of God. For more information about temple, go to the Master Glossary.

The people who serve at the **altar** receive part of the offerings. The altar is the place in the temple where the people offer animals or other things to God. Use the same word for altar as you have used in other books. The word altar is in the Master Glossary.

Paul does not want to be a hindrance to the **gospel**. This means that Paul does not want to make it more difficult for people to believe the gospel. Use the same word for gospel as you have used in previous passages. The word gospel is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 9:1-14

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 9:15-23

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 9:15–23 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 9:15–23 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 9:15–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the previous section, Paul had argued that Paul is an apostle. Therefore Paul has the right to ask the believers to support Paul with food or money. Paul gave a long explanation why someone who works for the gospel should get money or other support from the believers. But then, very surprisingly, Paul says that he does not even want the people in Corinth to give Paul anything! Paul would rather die than have people pay him!

Paul is even boasting about not getting money from the people. Boasting means that you are proud of something, and are telling this to other people. Earlier in Paul's letter, Paul had said that it was not good to boast. The people in Corinth very much liked to boast. The Corinthian people were always telling each other how clever they were, or how good their work was. The Corinthians must have found it really strange that Paul was boasting about having to work with his hands because Paul did not get paid for his preaching! These were not things that the Corinthians would ever be proud of!

Stop here and discuss: In your community, how do people boast about things they do well? What kind of things do they boast about? How do other people respond if someone boasts? Pause this audio here.

So, Paul says that Paul is proud because Paul does not get money from his preaching. If the people would pay Paul, there would be nothing left that Paul could be proud of. Of course, Paul is preaching the gospel, but Paul cannot be proud of that. You cannot be proud of something that you *have* to do. Only if you do something

because it was your own idea, *then* someone else could praise you. But if you do it because someone told you to do it, then no one can praise you for that. And Paul has to preach the gospel; it would be terrible for Paul if he would not do it!

And so, Paul cannot boast because Paul is preaching the gospel. Paul preaches the gospel because he has to.

But Paul *is* boasting that he is not accepting payment for it. Paul has the right to accept payment, but Paul shares the gospel freely with people, without getting paid for it. And that is what is making Paul feel proud about himself.

You will remember that Paul is saying all this in order to give an example to the people in Corinth. Paul wants to convince the people in Corinth to give up their rights as well, if that would help their fellow believers. The Corinthians very much like to boast, so Paul is giving them something they can boast about!

Stop here and discuss: Can you tell a story about something that you did that you are proud of? Why are you proud about it? Pause this audio here.

Then Paul begins to explain why Paul does not want to accept payment from people. If Paul does not get payment from anyone, Paul is free. Paul probably means that he can then do and say what Paul wants. Paul can preach to poor people as well as to rich people.

But then, very surprisingly, Paul says that even though he is free, Paul wants to be the *slave* of all people! Paul does this so that Paul will win people for Christ.

What does Paul mean when Paul says that he makes himself a slave to all people? Well, it means that Paul adjusts to the needs of other people. Remember that Paul had earlier been talking about eating meat. Paul had said that even though the believers were allowed to eat meat that was first offered to idols, the believers should not do this if other believers thought they should not eat this. Paul wants to show the people that Paul is doing the same thing. Paul does not just do what he wants, but Paul thinks about the needs of other people. Paul says all this, because Paul wants people in Corinth to follow his example.

So, Paul says that he became a Jew in order to help Jews to follow Jesus. Of course, Paul was already a Jew, but here Paul means that he behaves like a Jew when he meets other Jews. This will help the other Jews to listen better to Paul, and to better understand what Paul says.

Jews wanted to obey all the laws that God had given them through Moses. Paul knew that when people became followers of Jesus, they did not need to keep all of these laws anymore. For instance, the laws about circumcision, or ritual purity, or sacrifices, were no longer needed. But when Paul was meeting with other Jews, Paul did still follow these rules. Paul knew it was not needed for himself, but Paul did it because of the other people. Paul did not want them to reject Paul's message because of the way Paul lived.

Other people with whom Paul interacted were not Jews. These people had never followed the law of Moses. And so, when Paul is with them, he does not follow these rules either. Otherwise, those people might reject Paul's message because they might think that these rules are too difficult to follow.

However, Paul says that even though Paul adjusts to those people, Paul does obey the law of God—not the law that God gave through Moses, but the law that God gave through Christ. The law that God gave through Christ says that we have to love each other. This law is one Paul keeps in any situation, no matter who Paul is with.

So, for Jewish people who were obeying the law of Moses, Paul also obeyed the law, even though Paul knew that he did not have to. And for non-Jewish people who did not know the law of Moses, Paul did not obey that law, even though Paul did obey the law of Christ. It is *because* Paul is obeying the law to love all people that Paul is doing all this!

Stop here and discuss: Can you tell a story about a time that you changed your behavior, or some habit, because you were with people with different customs? What happened? Pause this audio here.

Paul then gives one more example of how Paul himself adjusts to the needs of other people. Paul says that for weak people, Paul himself became weak as well. A weak person does not mean a person who has no strength in their body, but a person about whom other people think: "This person does not have very much faith," or "This person is not very spiritual," or "This person is not very important." Paul's listeners will right away think back to the earlier discussion about eating meat that people offered to idols. There, Paul was talking about

"weak believers." This had to do with people who did not want to eat meat that other people offered to idols. Therefore the other believers, who said that there was nothing wrong with eating meat, called these people weak. The believers who said there was nothing wrong with eating meat looked down on these so-called "weak believers." But Paul does not look down on these people. When Paul is with them, Paul also will not eat this meat.

Paul might also mean something else when he talks about weak people here. Paul might also think about people who are poor, or not important in society. Because Paul is working with his hands, Paul is also poor, and not important in the society. Paul has become poor so that poor people are willing to listen to Paul's message.

Paul then summarizes by saying that Paul changes to be like all people, in the hope that some people may then be saved. Of course, Paul does not mean that when other people sin, Paul will also sin. But when it comes to customs or behaviors, Paul will change his actions.

Paul says he does this because Paul wants to do exactly what the gospel, or good news about Christ, requires. Paul is showing the kind of love that cares more about other people than about himself. Paul is acting just like Jesus acted when he showed everyone the good news that God loves all people.

Do not forget that Paul is saying all this because Paul wants the people in Corinth to follow his example!

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 9:15–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul says that Paul is proud that he does not get paid to preach the gospel.

In the second part: Paul says that Paul adjusts to all people for the sake of the gospel.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Jews, who follow the law of Moses
- People who are not Jews, and who do not follow the law of Moses
- So-called "weak" people
- Christ
- And God

In the previous section, Paul explained that Paul has the right to ask for material support. Paul begins this section by saying, "But I have not made use of these rights." The word "but" makes clear to Paul's listeners that Paul is going to say something unexpected.

Stop here and discuss as a group a story in which something surprising happens. How will you make it clear that at the start of this part of Paul's letter, Paul is saying something that no one expects Paul to say! Pause this audio here.

Paul says he would rather die than receive payment from the people in Corinth. It seems Paul is feeling very strongly about this. Paul does not even complete his thought! Right away Paul jumps forward, saying that Paul does not want anyone to take away his reason for boasting.

Paul has the right to ask the church for financial support. Paul does not make use of this right. This is what makes Paul happy and proud.

Paul says that he is preaching because he has to, not because Paul wanted himself to do this. Paul does not mean that Paul does not like what he is doing. Paul means that it was not Paul's own idea. God gave Paul the responsibility to do this. Paul is just doing what he has committed to God to do. If you would tell a servant to clean the house, or to work on the field, you would not say later, "Oh, wow, you have cleaned the house! I am so proud of you!" You would not say that because the servant had to do what you told them to do. In the same way, no one can say, "Paul, it is so wonderful that you are preaching the gospel!" Paul just has to do it.

Stop here and do this activity: Play a game. Divide into two groups—one group small and one group large. Tell everybody to stand in a line and then run to the other side of the room. However, the people in the small group can only hop on one leg. Pause this audio here.

Now, do this activity again. But this time, the people in the large group can choose. They have the right to run normally, but they can choose not to use that right and only hop on one leg. Pause this audio here.

Now that you have done this activity, ask the people in the small group, "How did you feel about the other people running fast while you had to hop? How did you feel when some people in the large group decided to hop as well?"

Ask the people in the second group, "Why did you use, or not use, your right to run normally?" Pause this audio here.

When you did this activity, maybe some people said that they felt happy that some other people decided to hop on one leg as well. Maybe they said that this made them happy because now they were not the last ones to reach the other side. Maybe people who decided to hop felt a little bit silly about doing it, but those people did it anyway, for the sake of the other people. They gave up their right to run normally, because they wanted to be kind to the other people.

Paul really wanted his listeners to understand that it is a good thing to give up your rights! It is something that you can be proud of, even when in the eyes of other people you will look silly.

In the second part, Paul says that he adjusts to all people for the sake of the gospel. Paul even becomes like a slave to all people. Slaves were the lowest people in society. Slaves have no rights. Nobody would want to be a slave. Remember that the people in Corinth were very proud people. They would be very shocked that Paul was willing to be a slave!

Paul made himself a slave to all people, so that Paul could win, or gain, people for Jesus. This can mean two different things. To win a person can mean to help someone who is *not* a believer to become a believer in Jesus. It can also mean to help someone who is already a believer, but who is struggling to keep believing. Paul may be thinking about both meanings.

Stop here and do this activity: Play a game where everyone runs away from one person, who runs after everyone who is running. Tell that person to try to tap other people on their shoulder as they are running away. When that person manages to do so, the person they tapped will turn around and hold on to the person who tapped them. Keep going till the first person has tapped everybody else on their shoulder, and everybody is holding on to the first person. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss: In this game, the first person won, or gained, people. How would you say that in your language? Discuss how Paul would say that he adjusted to all people, or changed his behavior to be like all people, in order to win them. Pause this audio here.

Paul became like the people that Paul wanted to share the gospel with. This means that Paul adjusted his behavior to these people. Paul probably used different words or even different languages when speaking to different people. Paul ate different food, depending on who he ate with. Paul wanted the other people to feel that Paul was not different from them. Paul wanted them to feel comfortable with him.

Stop here and do this activity: Ask some of the people in the group to act out different types of people that may live in your community—for example, laborers, teachers, or people from a certain tribe. Ask the other people in your group to walk around the room. Have these people go and meet the first people. Whenever they are meeting with someone, they adjust the way they speak or behave to match the person they are talking to. Then, they move to the next person and adjust to them.

Alternatively, ask some people in the group to act in a particular way. For instance, one person could be clapping their hands the whole time, another person could hold one arm in the air, and another person could be touching their nose. Then, have the other people walk around the room and do the same thing whenever they are talking with those people. Pause this audio here.

When you have done this activity, please discuss: How was it to adjust yourself to the other people? And, when other people were adjusting to you, how did this make you feel? Pause this audio here.

Paul is adjusting to other people because Paul loves those people.

Paul ends by saying that Paul does "all these things" because of the gospel. "All these things" means everything that Paul has been saying in this section: so, giving up Paul's right to receive money, and adjusting his behavior to other people. Paul says that by doing this, Paul becomes a partner with the gospel. This means that Paul does all these things so that the good news, or the gospel, will spread and people will know how much God loves them. Paul works together with God to spread God's good news, and therefore Paul also receives the benefits of the good news!

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 9:15–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Jews, who follow the law of Moses
- People who are not Jews, and who do not follow the law of Moses
- So-called "weak" people
- Christ
- And God

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Act out that Paul says that Paul has not made use of his right to receive financial support from the people in Corinth. Paul did not say everything he said so far so that the people in Corinth would start paying Paul. Paul would rather die. Act out that Paul is boasting that Paul does not accept money for his preaching. That is the only reason that Paul has to boast. Paul cannot boast about preaching the gospel, because Paul is not doing that voluntarily. Paul is preaching the gospel because Jesus gave Paul that responsibility. Paul does not deserve

praise for that. But Paul is giving up voluntarily his right to receive payment. Paul is preaching the gospel without getting anything back for it. Paul is proud about that.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like:

- "I know that the people in Corinth think that it is silly that I work with my hands. I know that they look down on me because of that. But I am still doing it, and this is making me happy. The people in Corinth are boasting for all the wrong reasons. They are so proud. I really want them not to look down on other people! They have to follow my example."

Act out that Paul says that because Paul is free, Paul can make himself a slave to all people. Paul is doing this to win more people. For Jews, Paul becomes a Jew. For people who obey the law of Moses, Paul obeys the law of Moses, even though Paul knows that he does not have to do that. For the people who know they are free from the law, Paul also becomes free from the law. But, Paul does have to obey the law of Christ. For so-called weak people, Paul also becomes weak. Whatever people Paul is with, Paul becomes like those people. Paul does this because Paul hopes that he might at least save some of them. By doing this, Paul is doing what the gospel is all about.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like:

- "I hope that the people in Corinth will follow my example. They should not call some people weak. They should love all people, and not think about their own rights," or
- "I love the believers in Corinth, and I want them to experience what it is like when someone loves them enough to be like them."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 9:15–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul begins this part of Paul's letter by saying that Paul would rather die than not be able to **boast** about not accepting money. Use the same word for boast that you have used in previous passages.

Paul said he had to preach, or tell people about, the gospel, because God gave Paul that responsibility. Paul says that God made Paul a **steward** of the gospel. A steward is someone who has to look after the property of their master. The same idea of being a steward is here as you saw earlier in 1 Corinthians 4:2, so you may want to use similar language to describe this. For more information about steward, see the Master Glossary.

Paul talks about preaching the **gospel**. Use the same word for gospel as you have used in previous passages. The word gospel is in the Master Glossary.

Paul adjusts to all people in order to win, or gain, people.

Stop here and think about the activity you did in step three when a person won or gained all the people who that person tapped on the shoulder. How will you talk about Paul changing Paul's behavior in order to win people? Pause this audio here.

Paul becomes a **slave** to everyone in order to win them. Paul becomes like the **Jews** in order to win Jews. Use the same word for slave and Jews as you have used in earlier passages. The words slave and Jew are in the Master Glossary.

Paul later says that Paul adjusts to all people in order to **save** some of them. In this instance, use the same word for save that you have used in previous passages, and see salvation in the Master Glossary for more information, if needed.

Paul talks about people who are "under the law." The law here means the law that God had given the Israelites through Moses. People who are "under the law" is another way of talking about Jews. The Jews wanted to obey all the commandments that God had given in his law. Use the same word that you have used for the law of Moses in other passages. For more information, refer to law in the Master Glossary.

Paul does always obey the law of **Christ**. This means the law that Christ gave to Christ's followers. This is the law to love each other. Use the same word for Christ as you have used in other passages. The word Christ is in the Master Glossary.

Paul does everything that he does so that Paul can also share in the gospel, or become a partner in the gospel. To be a partner in something means that someone works alongside someone else and both share in the benefits of the work. Paul works alongside God to share the gospel, or good news about Christ. As a result, Paul shares in the benefits of the gospel also!

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will talk about Paul partnering in the gospel.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 9:15-23

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Remember that Paul is still talking to the proud believers in Corinth who thought that they had much spiritual knowledge, and who looked down on some other believers. Paul has said before that Paul wants the believers to follow Paul's example and to give up their rights for the sake of other believers. The believers should follow Paul's example and adjust to other people. In this passage, and in the next one, Paul is warning the believers. The believers may think that they are so spiritual, but they have to be careful! The believers may still fail!

In this section, Paul is using an example from sports. The people in Corinth liked sports. Every two years, people had a big competition, and many people from all over the place would come to watch. People had races to see who could run the fastest, and fighting matches, and many more sports. One of the sports was boxing. Boxing is a sport where people beat each other with their fists, until one of them gives up.

Stop here and discuss: What kind of sports do people in your community play? Do people have competitions with each other? How do they prepare for such a competition? Pause this audio here.

The people who participated in these sport competitions had trained for a long time. In every competition, only one person could win the prize. The prize in itself was not very valuable. It was a circle made of leaves that people put on the head of the winner, like a crown. But it was a very great honor to win this crown!

Stop here and discuss: In your community, can people win a prize for something? What do they have to do in order to get the prize? What is the prize? Pause this audio here.

In the previous section, Paul had given himself as an example. Like Paul, the Corinthians should be willing to give up their rights and adjust to other people. They should not be proud and look down on other believers.

In this section, Paul gives them another example to follow. They have to follow the example of someone who is practicing very hard to prepare for a competition. This person must have a lot of self-control. This person cannot be lazy, or eat too much, or stop practicing. Otherwise this person will not win! Only one person can win, and that is the person who has trained the most.

Stop here and discuss: Can you tell a story about someone who trained, or practiced, very hard to become good at something? Pause this audio here.

Paul uses this example to remind the proud believers in Corinth that they also need to have self-control. The believers also need to train. Of course, the believers do not need to train for a sports competition, but they need to train themselves in living as a Christian! This is hard work, indeed. But if the believers do this hard work, they will win a prize. This will not be like the prize, or the crown, that the people in the sports competition get. That crown falls apart after a short time. That crown does not last. But the prize that the believers will get will last forever! The people in Corinth may think that they have already won the prize. Or they think that they are so good that it is easy for them to get it. But Paul wants to warn them that only a runner who has trained very much will get the prize!

Paul does not mean that the believers should compete with each other, or that only one of them can get the prize. The life of a Christian is not a competition. Paul is just using the example from the sports competition to tell the believers to work just as hard as the sports person who will eventually get the prize.

Paul then again gives himself as an example. Paul puts all his energy into winning the prize.

Paul does not want to be like a runner who just runs here and there, and who forgets his goal. Paul also does not want to be like a boxer who is just beating the air instead of beating his target. Instead, Paul works hard to live like a Christian. Paul is a preacher, telling other people how to live. It would be terrible if at the end God would tell Paul that he, Paul, had failed!

So, if even Paul has to be careful that he will not miss the prize, the people in Corinth also have to be careful!

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul tells the people in Corinth that they should work hard to live as a Christian. The believers should take this very seriously, just as someone who trains for a sports competition takes his training very seriously.

In the second part: Paul says that Paul also works hard to live like a Christian. Even though Paul is a preacher, he could still fail.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Runners in a race
- One runner who wins the race
- A runner who runs around without a goal
- And a boxer

Paul begins by saying that the people in Corinth know that when there is a race, only one person wins. As Paul has done often, Paul says this by asking the people a question. Paul knows that the believers already know the answer to this question, but this is Paul's way of making them think.

A race is a competition between people to see who can run the fastest. A number of people would stand next to each other alongside a straight line. In the distance was another straight line. This could be 200 meters away, or further away. Then, someone would give a signal, and immediately all of the runners would start running. The first runner who would reach the next line was the winner. That person got the prize. A prize can be many different things.

Stop here and do this activity: As a group, go outside and have a race together! If there is not enough open space to run, do a different type of race. For instance, you might walk across the room on the tips of your toes, or come up with another creative idea yourself! First, decide where people will begin the race. Then decide where they have to finish. Make sure everybody starts at exactly the same time. Pause this audio here.

The Corinthians should be like the person who wins! Paul does not mean that Christian life is like a competition. Paul means that all of the believers should be just as serious and committed in their Christian life as a runner who is training to win a race. The runner who has practiced most, who is the most fit, and who takes the race most seriously will win the race. The people in Corinth should be as dedicated as such a person.

The people who participate in a sports competition train very hard. These people cannot be lazy. These people have to practice discipline. Discipline means that often these people cannot just do what they want to do. These people have to get up early and train for long hours even when they get tired and want to give up. Because if these people give up, they will not get the prize!

The people in the competition want to get the prize. The prize for them was a crown that people made of leaves from a pine tree. After a short time the crown would be gone. Christians also will get a prize. But the prize the Christians get will last forever! Paul does not say what this prize is. Paul could mean that the prize is to live forever with God. Or Paul could mean that the prize is something else that God will give the believers—maybe praise for what they have done.

Stop here and look at a picture of the crown that the people could win in these competitions. Can you use some leaves or flowers to make such a crown yourselves? You will get to use it later. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss: What word will you use in your translation for this crown that will only last for a short time? How will you describe the crown that the believers will get that will last forever? Pause this audio here.

Paul then gives two examples from people in a competition who can never win the race. And Paul says that Paul does not want to be like these people. The first example is a runner who is running around aimlessly. In a race, all the runners begin in the same place, and they all have to run towards the same place. The first one who reaches the goal wins. Of course, you want to run directly towards the goal. If you run off in a different direction, or forget where the goal is, you can never win. Paul does not want to be like that! Paul wants to keep the goal in mind all the time. Remember that the goal for a Christian is the prize of living forever with God, even though Paul never clearly says this in this passage. Paul assumes that the Corinthians know what the prize is.

Stop here and do this activity: Repeat the race you have done earlier. But this time, some of you should pretend to forget where the goal is and just run anywhere! Who are the people who win the race? Put the crown that you have made earlier on the head of the winner! Pause this audio here.

The second example is a boxer who is beating the air instead of beating the person he is fighting with. You can never win if you just punch the air. You would just be wasting your energy and not get anything in return. Paul does not want to be like that person either.

Stop here and discuss: Do people in your community have a sport where they beat each other with their fists? What do you call this sport? How will you describe someone who is beating, or punching, the air instead of beating the person he fights with? Pause this audio here.

So, Paul does not want to waste his energy and forget his goal. Paul wants to think about the goal all the time. Paul then says that he beats his body and makes it his slave. This is special language that means to be strict with himself. Paul does not mean that Paul is hurting his body. Paul means that his whole life, or everything Paul does, is under discipline. Paul does not just do whatever he wants. But Paul is training, practicing, working hard, to live as a Christian.

It is important for Paul to train himself in living as a Christian. Paul is teaching other people to do this. It would be terrible if at the end Paul himself would fail! Paul does not want to be disqualified for the prize. If you are disqualified, this means that you are not good enough even to participate in the race.

Stop here and do this activity: Go outside and collect a bunch of rocks. If you cannot find rocks, take leaves, shells, or any object you can find. Take one rock and put it in the middle. This rock is now the standard. You are going to build something with these rocks, but you only want rocks that are bigger than this one. One by one, take another rock and place it next to the one in the middle. Is it bigger? If it is, then it has passed the test. You can keep it. Is it smaller? If it is, then it has failed the test. You throw it away. This rock is now disqualified. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss how you will say that Paul does not want to be disqualified for the prize. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Runners in a race
- One runner who wins the race
- A runner who runs around aimlessly
- And a boxer

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Act out that Paul is speaking. Next to Paul, the other people can act out the actions of the sports Paul talks about. You can use the crown that you have made earlier as well!

First, Paul reminds the people in Corinth that when there is a race, only one person can win. Paul says that everybody should be like the person who wins. All the people who participate in the competition train very hard. These people do this to win the prize—a crown. This crown will not last. But Christians train so that they can win a crown that will last forever!

Pause the drama.

Ask the sports people who are training for the race, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The people may answer things like:

- "I really want to win. I have to practice harder!" or
- "I am so tired! I want to rest, but I should keep going if I want to win."

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you thinking?" The person may answer things like:

- "I want the people in Corinth to realize that they should not be lazy! The Corinthians should not think that they have already won!"

Act out that Paul says that he does not run aimlessly. Paul does not fight like a boxer who is just beating the air. Paul disciplines himself. Otherwise, Paul himself might not win the prize!

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person may answer things like:

- "I want to keep the goal in mind at all times! I have to be very disciplined. I have told other people how to live as a Christian. So I really have to do my best to live as a Christian! It would be so terrible if I myself would not get the prize!"

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul talks about runners in a **race**. Some translations say runners in a **stadium**. A stadium is a big space where people can watch a race. In a race, many people run towards a goal, and the first person to reach the goal wins a prize. People run the race in an open area, and all around this area are places for people to sit or stand in order to watch.

Stop here and discuss what word you will use for a race where people can win a prize. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that Paul **beats his body** and **makes it his slave**. This is what a sports person would do. A sports person wants to be in complete control of their body. But Paul is probably not talking about Paul's body. Paul is just using words and pictures from the example of sport. What Paul probably means is that Paul wants to be disciplined in his whole life and work hard at everything Paul does. This means that Paul wants to live as a Christian every day.

Stop here and discuss how you will say that Paul will "beat his body" and "make it his slave." Use the same word for slave as you have used in other passages. The word slave is in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul is still talking to the proud believers in Corinth who thought that they had much spiritual knowledge and who looked down on some other believers. Paul had told these believers that they should be willing to give up their rights for the sake of other believers. Paul was especially talking about these believers' right to eat food that was offered to idols. Paul then gave these believers an example from sports to warn them that you can only win a race if you do your very best. Like a person who runs a race, the people in Corinth had to do their very best to live as a Christian.

In this section, Paul continues to warn the proud believers. These believers think that God has saved them, and therefore they can do whatever they want. But Paul warns these believers that if they keep being proud, and if they are careless in their behavior, God may still punish them! This fits with the example of the race Paul gave earlier: they might not win the prize if they are careless!

Paul warns these believers by giving examples from the history of the Israelite people. God had saved the people of Israel from being slaves in Egypt. But even so, when some of them sinned, God punished them! Just like the Israelites, the people in Corinth have to be careful. If someone is saved, it does not mean that they can then just keep sinning!

Stop here and discuss: Can you tell a story about your ancestors that people are still telling each other as a warning? Pause this audio here.

The proud believers in Corinth think they are safe. They think they are spiritually strong. God has saved them, and so they think it does not matter anymore what they do. But because they think this, they have become careless. Paul warns them that God will still punish them if they keep sinning!

Paul uses here the picture of standing. The proud believers think that they are standing firm: Nobody can push them over. But they are too confident, and that is very risky! In the next section, Paul will make clear that the very risky thing that the proud believers are doing is to eat in the temples where people worship idols.

Stop here and discuss: Can you tell a story about someone who was very confident about something, but who still failed? Pause this audio here.

Paul ends by giving the proud believers in Corinth an encouragement. If these believers feel the temptation to sin, God will help them. Maybe they think that the temptation to go into the idol temples is so strong that they cannot resist it. But Paul says that this temptation is nothing special. Every believer has to deal with temptations. The temptation for the proud believers is not more difficult than other temptations are for other believers. So, the proud believers cannot use this as an excuse to go into the idol temples. They cannot say, "The temptation was more than I could handle, and that is why I went into the temple!" No, God will help them. God is faithful. God will make sure that the believers only have to deal with temptations that they can resist. And when the believers feel temptation, then God will show the believers a solution for how they can resist.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul gives some examples from the history of the Israelites.

In the second part: Paul gives encouragement that God will help the believers if they face temptation to sin.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The people of Israel
- Moses
- Christ
- God
- And the believers in Corinth who are listening to Paul

Paul begins by saying that Paul does not want the believers to be ignorant. Paul means that he wants the believers to know something. Paul wants the believers to know what happened with the Israelites.

Paul does not use the word Israelites, but Paul uses the word fathers, or ancestors. The Israelites were not really the ancestors of the people in Corinth. God began God's plan for the people of the world with the Israelites. Everybody who believes in Jesus is therefore a spiritual descendent of the Israelites. The believers in Corinth do not have a blood relationship with the Israelites, but the believers do have a spiritual relationship with the Israelites.

Paul then tells the people in Corinth little pieces from some stories about the Israelites. These stories all happened when God freed the Israelites from being slaves in Egypt. For many years, the Israelites traveled through lonely wilderness on their way to the land that God had promised to give them. If you have never heard this whole story, then do listen to the story someday! You can find this in the Old Testament book of Exodus and in the books after Exodus.

In this difficult time, when the Israelites were traveling through wilderness, God took care of them. God was present with the Israelites in a cloud. This cloud protected the Israelites. At one time, God also made sure that all of the Israelites safely crossed the sea. Paul says that this experience for the Israelites was like a baptism. When a believer, or Christian, has received baptism, that person then belongs to the community of Jesus. A Christian receives baptism "in Christ." The Israelites received baptism "in Moses." Moses was the leader of the Israelites. God had appointed Moses to take the Israelites out of Egypt. So, when the Israelites experienced these events, they became part of the community of Moses. They became part of the people that God saved.

When the Israelites traveled through the wilderness, the Israelites often had no food or water. But God took care of the Israelites' needs. God gave the Israelites food and water. Every day, God gave the Israelites a special food called manna. And when the Israelites ran out of water, God did a miracle and made water come out of a rock. Paul says that the Israelites had spiritual food and drink. Paul means that God provided this food and drink. It was real food and drink, but it came from God.

Stop here and do this activity: Act out that the Israelites travel through the wilderness. Act out that every morning as they wake up, they find the manna all around their tents. Act out that they drink water that is pouring out from a rock. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the rock from which the water came was a spiritual rock. This means that God had given the Israelites that rock. Paul says that this rock was following the Israelites when they traveled. The story in Exodus does not tell us this, but the Israelites had some stories that were not in the Bible. In one of the stories, it says that the rock was moving with the Israelites. Paul says that this rock was Christ. Paul does not mean that Christ was a piece of stone, but Paul means that Christ was the one who gave the people the water. So, even though the Israelites did not yet know Christ, Christ was already with them and taking care of the people.

But then Paul says something shocking. *All* the Israelites had these wonderful experiences, *all* received baptism, they *all* had spiritual food, and Christ was with them—but, not all of them survived! God was not happy with some of them, and Paul says that these people's bodies were scattered in the wilderness, meaning that many of them died.

Stop here and do this activity: Give everybody a biscuit, or a piece of fruit, or any other small object. Each person should now place this object on top of their head. Now walk around the room for some time, or go outside and do some exercise together. If someone loses their object off of their head, they cannot pick it up again. After one or two minutes, stop. The people who still have their object on top of their head can eat it. The people who lost their object cannot eat it.

If in your community everybody wears things on their head, so this is too easy, then place the object on someone's shoulder, or on their foot! It should be a little bit difficult! Pause this audio here.

When you played this game, everybody got the same thing in the beginning. But some people lost their object, because they were not careful. In the same way, all the Israelites received the same thing, but some of them lost it! And in the same way, all the believers in Corinth received the same thing, but some of them may still lose it.

Paul then says that what happened to the Israelites is an example to us. The Israelites wanted to do evil things, and therefore God punished the Israelites. This is a warning that we should not do evil things.

Paul says that we should not worship idols, like the Israelites did. Paul quotes a passage from the book of Exodus that says, "The people ate and drank, and then got up to party." Paul knows that the believers in Corinth will know that this is part of a story where the Israelites had made an idol out of gold and worshiped this. After they made the idol, they had a wild feast to celebrate that idol. This feast may have included committing sexual sins. So, the Israelites made a big mistake here: they worshiped and celebrated an idol. This is quite similar to what people were doing in the temples in Corinth!

And so, Paul also says very clearly that people should not commit sexual sins. Because when the people of Israel committed sexual sins, God punished them. God killed 23,000 Israelites in one day!

Then, Paul says that we should not test Christ. Paul means that we should not try to see how many wrong things we can do before God will punish us! The people of Israel were testing God when they complained to God again and again. It was as if the Israelites were trying to see how much they could complain before God would get angry!

One time, the Israelites complained because they were unhappy with the manna, or the food that God sent them every day. God was very angry with the Israelites because they complained so much. God sent poisonous snakes in their midst, and many of the Israelites died.

Stop here and do this activity: Act out that the Israelites complain about the manna, and that the Israelites say they want to go back to Egypt. Act out that God gets so angry with the Israelites that God sends poisonous snakes that kill many of the people. Pause this audio here.

The people of Israel did not yet know Christ, but Paul says that when the people were complaining against God, they were in fact testing Christ, just as the believers in Corinth are doing!

Paul says that the believers in Corinth should not complain. One time, when some of the Israelites complained, an angel of God destroyed the people. There is no story in the book of Exodus where an angel destroys the people, but the Israelites did complain many times, and God did punish them.

So, Paul says that all these things happened to the Israelites to give us an example. God made sure that people wrote down these stories. These stories warn us not to sin. Paul says that God wanted people to write these stories down for us, the people who live at the end of the times. In the New Testament, the end of time, or times, means the whole time between Jesus' resurrection and the day that Jesus will return again.

And so, Paul says that people who are confident and think that they are standing strong have to be careful. These people may still fall!

Stop here and do this activity: Find an object that someone can stand up on with some difficulty. For instance, you may use a ball, a coconut, or an upside-down bucket. Ask one person to stand on this object. Give the person time to find their balance. Then, ask the person, "Are you standing strong? Can you keep standing?" The person may say, "Yes, I am standing strong." Then, let another person try to push this person over. Be careful that the person does not fall and hurt themselves! Pause this audio here.

When you did this activity, the person who was standing on the object thought they were standing strong. But in fact, other people could easily push them over. Like this, the people in Corinth thought that nothing could happen to them. Paul used the special language of standing and falling to show that this was not true. They thought that they were spiritually strong, and that God had saved them, but they could still sin. God might still have to punish them, just as God did with their spiritual ancestors, the Israelites!

Stop here and discuss: In your language, how do you describe someone who is very sure that nothing will happen to them? Pause this audio here.

Paul ends with an encouragement that God will help them when they feel the temptation to sin.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. If you want, you can first listen to a translation of this passage again.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The people of Israel
- Moses
- Christ
- God
- And the believers in Corinth who are listening to Paul

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Act out that Paul speaks and that the believers in Corinth listen to Paul. On the side, you can have some people act out what happens among the Israelites.

Act out that Paul says Paul wants his brothers and sisters, the believers in Corinth, to know that their spiritual ancestors all had the same experience. These spiritual ancestors all were under the protection of the cloud of God's presence. These ancestors all passed safely through the sea. They all received the same baptism that made them part of the community of Moses. They all had the same spiritual food. They all had the same spiritual drink. They all drank from the spiritual rock that followed them. This rock was Christ.

But God was not happy with some of these people, and God killed these people while they were traveling through the wilderness. These things happened as an example for us, so that we will not want to do evil things.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I really hope that the believers in Corinth listen to me, because what happened to the Israelites could also happen to them!"

Act out that Paul says to the believers in Corinth that the believers should not worship idols as the Israelites did. The believers can read in the Scriptures that after the Israelites had made an idol, the Israelites sat down to eat and drink, and then the Israelites got up and had a wild party. Paul says that we should not do sexual sin like the Israelites did. God punished the Israelites when they did this, and God killed 23,000 people! We should also not test Christ, because when the Israelites tested Christ, God sent snakes that killed many people! And we should also not complain, because when the Israelites complained, an angel of God destroyed them. All these things that happened to the Israelites are an example for us. These things are a warning for us who are now living in the end of times. And so, if people think that they are standing strong, they have to be careful! They may still fall.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "The believers in Corinth are so proud! They think they are so spiritual. The believers think that nothing will happen to them. But I want the believers to be careful and not to sin!"

Ask the people playing the believers in Corinth, "What are you thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "Oh! I do not want God to punish me as God punished the Israelites. I have to be more careful. I should not go into the temples of these idols anymore."

Act out that Paul says that the temptation that the Corinthians face is not more difficult than any temptation that other believers face. God is faithful to the believers. God will make sure that the people will not have to face temptation that is too difficult. Instead, whenever the believers face temptation to do something wrong, God will help them not to give in to the temptation.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I do not want the believers in Corinth to be lazy. The believers should stop participating in idol worship and sexual sins. If they really want to stop, and pray for it, then God will certainly help them! I am so glad that God is faithful, even though we are so weak!"

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul addresses the believers in Corinth as **brothers**, or **brothers and sisters**. Paul means that the believers are spiritual brothers and sisters of Paul, because they are all children of God and all belong to Jesus. Use the same word for brothers, or brothers and sisters, as you have used in other passages.

Paul talks about the believers' fathers, or their **ancestors**. Paul means the Israelites.

Stop here and discuss how you will make clear that Paul is talking about the Israelites. Maybe you could say "our ancestors the Israelites," or "your spiritual ancestors, the Israelites." Remember that the people in Corinth had no blood relationship with the Israelites. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that their ancestors were all under the **cloud**. Paul means the cloud, or the pillar of cloud, that traveled with the Israelites through the wilderness. If you already translated the book of Exodus, use the same term for cloud as you have used there.

Stop here and discuss what word you would use for the **cloud**. Pause this audio here.

The ancestors all crossed the **sea**. A sea is a large place where there is only water. If you already translated the book of Exodus, use the same term as you have used there.

If needed, stop here and look at a picture of a sea. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the Israelites were **baptized** into Moses. Baptism is a ritual where people are briefly immersed, or washed, in water. When a Christian takes baptism, this shows that they now belong to Jesus. Paul uses this same word to say that the Israelites, through Moses, belonged to God. Use the same word for baptism, or baptize, as you have used in other passages. The word baptism is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss how you will say that the Israelites were baptized into Moses. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the spiritual rock that traveled with the Israelites was **Christ**. Use the same word for Christ as you have used in other passages. The word Christ is in the Master Glossary.

God was not happy with the Israelite people, and while they were traveling through the **wilderness**, God killed many of the Israelites. The wilderness means a place that is very dry, where very few things grow, and where no people live. If you have already translated the book of Exodus, use the same term as you have used there. The word wilderness is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and look at a picture of a wilderness. Discuss how you will call this place in your language. Pause the audio here.

God punished the Israelites so that they would not want to do **evil** things. Evil is the opposite of good, and God hates evil.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word you will use for **evil**. Use the same word for evil that you have used in other books of the Bible. Evil is in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

God punished the Israelites because they were **idolaters**. An idolater is someone who worships an **idol**. An idol is an object that people make out of wood or stone. Then the people say that this object is a god. The people worship the object. Use the same word for idolater, or idol worshiper, as you have used in other passages. The word idol is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss how you will say that the Israelites were idolaters. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that **it was written** that the people sat down to eat and drink and got up to play. "It was written" means that people can read about this in the Scriptures. When, in the New Testament, people talk about the Scriptures, they mean the Old Testament.

Stop here and discuss how you want to say this. If you want to use the word **Scriptures**, use the same word as you have used in other passages. The word **Scriptures** is in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the people sat down to eat and drink and got up to **play**. The word "play" means that the people had a party, where they drank alcohol, danced, and perhaps even committed sexual sins.

Stop here and discuss how you want to say this in your language. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that we should not commit sexual **immorality**. Paul means that we should not do sexual sins, like sleeping with another person's husband or wife, or sleeping with more than one person. Paul has used this word many times already in Paul's letter. Use the same word as you have used earlier. The word **immorality** is in the Master Glossary.

Paul says that we should not test Christ, or try to see how much we can disobey Christ before Christ punishes us. When the Israelites did this, God sent **serpents**, or snakes, to kill the people. Use the same word for snakes that you have used in previous books of the Bible.

Stop here and look at a picture of snakes, if needed. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that when the Israelites grumbled, God sent an **angel of death**, or a destroyer, to kill them. Most people agree that the destroyer refers to a spiritual being that God sent to kill the Israelites as punishment for their grumbling. You may say that this was a heavenly messenger that God sent, or you may say that this was an angel of death.

Stop here and discuss how you will say **angel of death**, or destroyer, in your language. If you use **angel**, remember that **angel** is in the Master Glossary, and use the same word for **angel** that you have used in previous passages. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that we are living in the **end of the times**. Paul means that in our time God is going to complete everything. In the New Testament, the end of times means the whole period between Jesus' resurrection, and Jesus' return. So all of us, the people of Corinth 2,000 years ago as well as you and I now, are living at the end of time. There is only one more big thing that God is going to do, and that is that Jesus will come back and begin to rule forever!

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 10:1–13

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 10:14–22

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 10:14–22 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 10:14–22 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 10:14–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the previous passage, Paul gave examples from the people of Israel. God had saved the people of Israel from slavery, but the people disobeyed God. One particular sin that the people of Israel did was to worship idols. When the Israelites disobeyed God, God punished the Israelites. Paul wanted the people in Corinth not to be proud and careless in their behavior. God had saved the believers, but if the believers would keep sinning, God would still punish them!

Now that the believers in Corinth know about what happened to the Israelites when the Israelites worshiped idols, Paul warns the believers in Corinth very strongly that the believers should run away from worshiping idols. The believers should never worship anyone else but God.

In chapter eight, when Paul began the topic about eating food that people offered to idols, we already learned that this had to do with eating meals in the temples. The people in Corinth who did not follow Jesus worshiped many different gods. Each of these gods had a temple, or a place where there was a statue of this god—an idol. People would go to these temples on special days to eat. In these temples people did many things that were not good. During the meals, the people were praising the idols. People also committed sexual sins in these temples. Some men and women lived in these temples, and other people came to have sexual relations with these people. The people thought that if they had sexual relations with someone in the temple, something good would happen to them. So of course, Paul does not want believers to go to these temples.

Some believers in Corinth still wanted to go to these temples and eat the food in these temples. These believers had written a letter to Paul to talk to Paul about this. These believers did not want to worship the idols, but they just wanted to have a good meal, or to meet with their friends. After all, these believers had said, idols are nothing! The gods in these temples do not really exist! But Paul pleads with these believers to think very carefully about what they are doing.

In the beginning of Paul's teaching on this topic, in chapter eight, Paul had said that he agreed with the people in Corinth that idols are nothing. God is the only God. Other gods do not exist. And so, an idol is just a piece of wood or some other material—the idol has no power.

The proud believers in Corinth had said that because an idol is nothing, it is fine to go to a feast in the temple. But in this passage, Paul is explaining this more. Paul agrees that an idol is nothing, but what the proud believers forget is that there are *demons*. Demons want to pull people away from God. When people are worshiping idols, demons are very happy. When people are worshiping an idol, people are in fact worshiping demons.

And so, the proud believers should not think that nothing can happen to them if they eat a meal in the temple. The idols themselves are indeed nothing, but the demons *do* exist. When the people have a meal in the temple, it is as if they have a meal with an evil spirit!

Stop here and discuss: In your community, what does it mean when people eat together? How does it change the relationship you have with someone if you eat with that person? Pause this audio here.

Christians have a meal with Christ every time they have communion. When Christians drink the wine from the cup during communion, and when Christians together eat the bread, it is as if the Christians have a meal with Jesus. This communion shows that Christians have a relationship with Christ.

Paul says that the believers cannot have a meal with Christ *and* a meal with demons! Christians cannot have a relationship with Christ and with demons at the same time. If they would get into a relationship with demons, the Lord Jesus would become very jealous. The proud believers think that they are strong, but they would be very foolish if they thought that they were stronger than the Lord!

Stop here and do this activity: Use some chalk or objects to draw two circles on the floor, or go outside and use a stick to draw two circles in the dirt. The two circles should be at least four or five steps away from each other. Listen to the rest of the instructions when you are ready. Pause this audio here.

Now that you have your circles, tell a few people to stand inside one of the circles. Then, tell them to go and stand in the other circle, but they can not leave the first circle. Pause this audio here.

When you did this activity, you discovered that this task was impossible. If people wanted to step inside the second circle, they had to leave the first circle. There was no other way to do it.

In the same way, Paul says that people cannot have a relationship with Jesus and also a relationship with demons. If people would get into a relationship with demons, people would break their relationship with Jesus. And so, the believers should be very careful, and the believers should not go into the temples of the idols and eat the meals there.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 10:14–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has one part.

In this part: Paul tells the believers that they should not worship idols. The believers should not go into the temples of the idols and have meals there. The believers are right in thinking that idols have no power, but wherever people are worshiping idols, there are demons. If believers eat food that people offer to idols, it is as if the believers have a meal with the demons. The believers cannot have a meal with demons, because they already have a meal with Jesus whenever they have communion. If the believers have a meal with demons, Jesus would become very jealous.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers in Corinth
- The Israelites
- Idols
- Demons
- And the people who do not know Jesus and offer food to idols

Paul begins this part of Paul's letter by saying, "For these reasons, my dear friends, run away from worshiping idols." In the previous passages, Paul gave the reasons why the believers should do this. Paul gave the believers examples from the Israelites. These examples are a warning for the people in Corinth.

Paul calls the believers in Corinth Paul's dear friends. Even though Paul is speaking to the believers quite sternly, Paul wants the believers to know that Paul loves the believers and Paul is their friend.

Paul says that the believers have to flee from worshiping idols. If you flee from something, you run away from that thing very fast. It is as if Paul says, "If someone asks you to worship an idol together with them, you should not just say 'no,' but you should run away as fast as you can!"

Stop here and discuss how you will say that people should flee from worshiping idols. Pause this audio here.

Paul then says that Paul is speaking to wise people. The proud believers in Corinth think that they are very wise. If the believers are wise, they should be able to understand what Paul says.

Paul wants to encourage the believers to think carefully about what Paul says. If the believers think carefully, they will certainly agree with Paul!

Paul then talks about what happens when the believers have communion, or the Lord's supper. Paul asks the believers some questions. Paul knows the answer to these questions, but this is Paul's way of making the believers think about it.

Paul's first question is, "When we thank God for the cup, we share in the blood of Christ, don't we?" Paul expects the believers to answer: "Yes, this is true!"

When people have communion, they drink from a cup. Paul calls this the cup of blessing, or thanksgiving. Paul means that every time that people drink from this cup, they thank God for it. People do not really thank God for the cup itself, but for what it means to drink the wine that is in the cup. When people drink from the cup during communion, they share in the blood of Christ. Jesus gave his blood to save people. This means that Jesus died to save the people. When people have communion, it is as if Jesus says to them, "I gave my blood also for you! You also are saved, because I died for you! Therefore, you now belong to me. You and I have a relationship together."

Paul's second question is, "When we break the bread, we share in the body of Christ, don't we?" Paul again expects the believers to answer: "Yes, this is true!"

When the Israelites had a meal together, they had one big loaf of bread. At the beginning of the meal, the head of the family would break the loaf into smaller pieces. Then everybody would take a piece to eat. Every time that the Christian believers have communion together, they are doing this same thing. One of the believers would break pieces of a loaf of bread and give it to the other people.

Stop here and look at a picture of a big loaf of bread like the ones that the people used. Pause this audio here.

When people have communion, the bread is a symbol of the body of Christ. When they eat the bread, this shows believers that they belong to the body of Christ.

When Paul in his letters talks about the body of Christ, Paul is referring to all the believers together, or the church. Our physical body has many different parts—hands, feet, ears, eyes, and much more—but all these parts belong together. All of these parts together are one body. Like that, all the believers belong together. The believers belong to each other, because they all belong to Christ. Every time that the believers break and eat the bread during communion, the believers are saying, "We have a relationship with Jesus, because Jesus died for us. And we also have a relationship with each other, because Jesus died for each of us." When Paul talks about the body of Christ, Paul means the whole church, or all the believers together. All these people together are the spiritual body of Christ.

Stop here and discuss how you will say that the believers share in the body of Christ when they break and eat the bread. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that there is just one loaf of bread. Every believer takes a piece from the same loaf of bread. This shows that all the believers belong together. Together, they are *one* spiritual body, not many *different* spiritual bodies! When you remember how divided the people in Corinth were, then you know that Paul is giving them a very important message here!

Stop here and do this activity: Take some food that you can divide into parts, for instance a large fruit. Divide the fruit into pieces. Every person gets one piece and holds it. Each of these pieces themselves are not the fruit. Only when the pieces are together are they one whole fruit. Everybody's piece comes from the same fruit. All these pieces of fruit have a relationship with each other, because they all belong to the same fruit. This is the same for Christians. All Christians belong to the body of Christ. Think about this for a moment, and then enjoy eating your piece of fruit! Pause this audio here.

Paul then tells the Corinthians to look at the people of Israel. Paul means that Paul is going to tell the Corinthians something about the Israelites as an example.

The Israelites also had a temple. In this temple, they offered sacrifices to God. When people offered God a sacrifice, they slaughtered an animal and burned it on a platform that was called an altar. Some of the meat was completely burned up, but the people ate the rest of the meat. It was just as if the people and God were having a meal together! This showed that God and the people had a relationship with each other.

Paul again says all this in the form of a question. Paul expects the Corinthians to say, "Yes, it is true—when the Israelites ate from the sacrifices, they were sharing a meal with God. This showed that the Israelites had a relationship with God."

Well, now Paul is really going to make his point. The proud believers in Corinth wanted to go into the temples of the idols and have meals there. But the believers have to realize that if they eat from the food that is sacrificed to idols, it is as if the believers have a meal with the idols. The believers get into a relationship with the idols, just as the Israelites got into a relationship with God when they ate the meat that was offered to God. This is also just like how the Christian believers get into a relationship with Jesus every time they have communion. Paul actually does not say all this. Paul jumps right to the next point, but it is clear that this is what Paul means.

Paul then says that he does not mean to say that an idol really is a god. Paul already agreed with the people in Corinth that there is no other God besides God. Paul said that when he began to speak about this topic in chapter eight. But now Paul says that even though there are no gods, there *are* demons. Demons want to pull people away from God. Demons really want people to worship idols instead of worshiping God. Wherever people worship idols, demons like to go there. When people are worshiping an idol, people are in fact worshiping demons.

So this is the main reason that Paul does not want the believers to go into the temples of the Corinthian gods. The proud believers may think that there is no harm in doing this. But Paul does not want the believers to get into a relationship with demons.

The believers are already in a relationship with Jesus. They cannot also have a relationship with demons. If the believers do, Jesus would become very jealous! Jesus is stronger than the proud believers. If Jesus would become jealous, Jesus would certainly punish them!

Paul again says all this in the form of questions. This is Paul's way of making the people in Corinth think deeply.

Paul is addressing the people in Corinth, but at the end Paul says, "Are we trying to make the Lord jealous? Are we really stronger than him?" Paul is still addressing the people in Corinth, but Paul is speaking as if Paul himself is one of the people.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 10:14–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has one part.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers in Corinth
- The Israelites
- Idols
- Demons
- And the people who do not know Jesus and offer food to idols

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

First, you could act out that the believers have communion. Think about how you can show that Jesus is eating with them.

Then, you could act out that the people of Israel are sacrificing to God, and are eating the meat from the sacrifice. Think about how you can show that God is with the Israelites when they eat.

Then, act out that people in Corinth are going into the temples of their local gods to eat food that is offered to idols. Think about how you can show that demons are with these people.

Then, act out that Paul speaks his message. Let Paul stand while the people in Corinth listen to Paul. Whenever Paul asks a question, the believers can respond.

On the side, some people can do the actions of having communion, sacrificing, and eating in the temples of the idols.

Act out that Paul is addressing the believers. Paul says, "Dear friends, now that you know what happened to the Israelites, I really want you not to worship idols! You are wise people, so think carefully. Then you will see that I am right. Every time that we have communion and drink the cup of wine that we thank God for, this shows that Jesus has died for us, is it not so?"

The believers respond by saying, "Yes Paul, this is true."

Paul says, "And every time that we have communion and break the bread and eat it, this shows that we are all part of the body of Christ, is it not so?"

The believers respond by saying, "Yes Paul, this is true."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you thinking or feeling?" People may answer things like:

- "It is true. When we have communion, this shows that we have a relationship with Jesus. It is like having a meal with Jesus. We like having a meal together with Jesus!"

Paul says, "There is only one loaf of bread, and we all eat from the same bread. This shows that we all belong together."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person may answer things like:

- "I want the believers in Corinth to realize that they belong together. They belong to Jesus, and therefore they belong to each other as well. Some people should stop being so arrogant and stop looking down on other people!"

Act out that Paul continues to speak. Paul says, "Think again about the people of Israel. Whenever they eat from a sacrifice on the altar, they have a relationship with God, is it not so?"

The believers respond by saying, "Yes, Paul, this is true. Whenever people eat food that is sacrificed to God, this shows that they have a relationship with God."

Now, here is a little part that we can add in this drama even though Paul does not say it. Paul does not say it, but it is clear that this is what Paul means. Paul says, "So, just like the Israelites had a relationship with God when they ate food that was sacrificed to God, you would get into a relationship with an idol if you would eat the food that is offered to an idol."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the believers in Corinth, "What are you thinking?" People may answer things like:

- "I do not understand it. I thought idols were nothing. How could we get into a relationship with an idol?"

Now we continue with what Paul did say. Paul says, "So, do I mean to say that food offered to idols has any special power, or that the gods that these idols represent really exist? No, that is not what I mean! Idols are nothing, and food offered to idols is just food, and nothing else. However, when people are offering food to idols, they are in fact offering to demons. I do not want you to get into a relationship with demons. You cannot have a meal with Jesus, and also have a meal with demons!"

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the people in Corinth, "What are you thinking or feeling?" People may answer things like:

- "Oh no! I had never thought about it like that. I do not want to get into a relationship with a demon! I am embarrassed. I am sad that I did this!" or
- "I now understand that going into the temple of an idol is more dangerous than I thought it was. I have to be more careful!"

Paul says, "Do we really want to make the Lord jealous? Do we think that we are stronger than he is?" Or Paul says, "If you will have a relationship with demons, the Lord Jesus will become jealous and he will punish you! Do not think that you are stronger than the Lord Jesus is!"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person may answer things like:

- "I hope that the proud believers in Corinth will stop going into the temples. It is dangerous for them, because they may get into a relationship with a demon. And if they go into the temples, the other believers who are not so strong in their faith may also go into the temples. Those believers may begin to worship idols again. That would be terrible. I really want the proud believers to think about their brothers and sisters. They are all part of the same spiritual body of Christ!"

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 10:14–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul says that the believers in Corinth should run away from idolatry. Idolatry means to worship an **idol**. An idol is an object that people make in order to worship a god. The object reminds the people about some characteristics of this god. People worship this idol as if it is this god itself. God had forbidden his people to ever worship an idol. Use the same word for idol as you have used in previous passages. The word idol is in the Master Glossary.

Paul says that he is speaking to **wise** people, and these people can judge, or decide, if Paul is right or wrong. A person who is wise understands many things. Use the same words for wise, and for judging to decide if someone is right or wrong, as you have used in previous passages. If you need more information, the word wisdom is in the Master Glossary.

Paul talks about the **cup of blessing that we bless**. When people bless something, it means that they thank God for it. Therefore, many translations say, "the cup of thanksgiving for which we thank God." Paul is talking

about the wine or juice that people drink when they have communion. Before the people drink from the cup, they thank God for it.

Stop here and discuss how you will describe this cup in your translation. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that when people drink from this cup, these people share in the blood of Christ. Jesus gave his blood to save people. You cannot live without blood. So if someone gives their blood, this is another way of saying that someone dies. So, this means that Jesus died to save the people. When people have communion, it is as if Jesus says to them, "I gave my blood also for you! You also are saved, because I died for you! Therefore, you now belong to me." So, the believers share in the benefits of the blood of Jesus, or the benefits of Jesus' death.

Stop here and discuss how you will say that when people drink from the cup during communion they are sharing in the **blood** of Christ. For more information about blood, see the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

When people **break the bread**, these people share in the body of Christ. Breaking the bread means to tear the bread into smaller pieces and to give it to each other to eat. Paul is talking about the bread that people eat when they have communion.

Stop here and discuss how you will say that people "break and eat" the bread. Pause this audio here.

When people eat the bread together during communion, these people share in the body of **Christ**. Use the same word for Christ as you have used in other passages. The word Christ is in the Master Glossary.

Paul gives the believers an example about the people of **Israel**. Paul says that when people eat from the **sacrifice**, they participate in the **altar**. The altar was an important place in the temple of God. The people who worked in the temple burned animals on the altar. They offered these animals to God. This was a way to worship God. When the other people then ate the meat of these animals, they were also worshiping God. They participated in the worship that took place at the altar. The word altar is in the Master Glossary. Use the same word as you have used in other books of the Bible.

When people eat from the sacrifice, this means they eat the meat that people had offered to God. The word sacrifice is in the Master Glossary. Use the same word as you have used in other books of the Bible.

The people of Israel, or Israelites, were the descendants of Jacob. The Israelites are now called the Jews. Use the same word for Israel as you have used in other books of the Bible. Israel is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss how you will say that when the Israelites ate from the meat that was offered, or sacrificed, to God, they participated in the worship that happened at the altar. Pause the audio here.

When people offer food to idols, they are offering food to **demons**. Demons are spirits that have rebelled against God. They want to do anything they can to destroy people. Use the same word as you have used in other passages. The word demon is in the Master Glossary.

If needed, stop here and discuss what word you will use for demon in this passage. Pause this audio here.

The **cup of the Lord** refers to the cup with wine that people drink when they have communion. It is the same as the cup of thanksgiving.

The **Lord** refers to Jesus. A Lord is someone who is a master over other people, who has full authority, and who deserves for people to give him respect. God is called the Lord because God has authority over the whole world. Jesus is also Lord. Use the same word as you have used in earlier passages. The word Lord is in the Master Glossary.

If people drink from the **cup of demons**, this means that they drink something and praise a demon at the same time.

Taking part of the **table of the Lord** refers to having communion. Taking part of the **table of a demon** means having a meal in honor of a demon.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate that people cannot take part in the table of the Lord and take part in the table of demons as well. Pause this audio here.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 10:14–22

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul had just warned the proud believers in Corinth that they should not participate in meals where people worshiped idols. The believers should not go to the temples of the idols and eat there. Even though the gods that the people worshiped there do not exist, demons *do* exist there. When someone worships an idol, they in fact worship a demon. Paul said that the believers should run away from such activities as fast as they could!

So, it is very clear that the believers should not eat meals in the temple of the idols. But what about food that people bought in the market? People had also offered some of this food to idols. Was eating this food a problem as well? The people in Corinth probably wanted to ask Paul this question.

In this passage, Paul explains that eating this food is not a problem in itself. Whenever the believers buy food, they do not have to ask whether the food has first been offered to an idol or not. As long as the believers are not eating this food in the temple, the food has no special meaning. It is just food! The food belongs to God, like everything else on earth.

Also, if someone who was not a believer invited believers to their house, the believers could just eat whatever the host gave them. The believers did not need to first ask their host whether the food had been offered to idols.

But, if during such a meal, someone else would say to the believers, "This meat has been offered to idols!" then the believers should not eat the meat. The other person thought that eating this food would be wrong, so the believers should not eat it either.

Stop here and discuss: Can you tell a story about something that some believers in your community think is right, but other believers think is wrong? Pause this audio here.

The proud believers thought that God allowed them to do anything, and so the proud believers thought they could always eat whatever they wanted. But these proud believers were not thinking about their brothers and sisters in the church. The believers needed to do things that were good for other people. The believers should not do things that offended other people or caused those people to think wrongly about something, whether these people were Jews, or Greeks, or people in the church.

Stop here and discuss: Can you tell a story about some things that believers do that might offend other people who are not believers, or other people in the church? In other words, what things do these believers do that cause others to think wrongly about something, or cause them to do something wrong, or to feel badly? Pause this audio here.

Paul himself always wants to do only things that are good for other people. Paul wants God to save these people. Paul follows the example of Jesus. The people in Corinth should follow the example of Paul.

So, this concludes Paul's teaching about whether or not to eat food that is offered to idols. Paul told the believers that they should not join the meals that people ate in the temples of the idols. If the believers did, they would in fact participate in the worship of demons. But it was fine to buy meat in the market, or to eat the meat in the house of someone else. Then it was just food with no special power. The believers did not have to worry whether this meat had been first offered to idols. However, if other people thought it was wrong to eat this meat, then the believers should not eat it either. The believers should not make these other believers feel guilty and confused. Because then these other believers might start worshiping idols again and stop following Jesus. The proud believers thought they had the right to do anything. Paul told these believers that it was much better to give up their rights if this would help other believers to grow stronger in their faith.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has one part.

In this part: Paul tells the Corinthian believers that these believers should only do things that are good for other believers. The believers should follow the example of Christ.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers in Corinth who think that they can do anything
- The believers in Corinth who think it is not good to eat food that has been offered to idols
- People who buy and sell in the market
- An unbeliever who invites a believer to dinner
- Greeks, or unbelievers, who do not know Christ
- Jews
- Christians, who are the Church of God
- Christ, the Lord
- And God

In the beginning of this passage, it is as if we are listening to a conversation between the proud believers and Paul.

The proud believers in Corinth say, "We can do whatever we want. God allows us to do anything." Paul responds by saying, "Even if this would be true, not everything we *can* do is also good for us."

The proud believers in Corinth repeat, "We can do whatever we want." But Paul says, "But not everything helps other people to grow—to become stronger in their faith. You should not just be thinking about yourself. You

should not only do things that are good for yourself. You should do things that are good for other people, or that build other people up!"

Paul uses the special language of someone who is building a house or some other structure. If you build up a house, you are making the house strong. If you build a person up, you are helping the person to become stronger spiritually. You help that person to trust God more.

Paul then begins to explain a bit more about eating food that is offered to idols. Even if the believers would not go into the temples of the idols, a lot of the people who sold food in the markets had also offered that food to idols. Paul says that the believers do not have to be too worried about this food. If the believers buy food at the market, or if they eat a meal in the house of some unbelievers, they can just eat the food. The believers do not have to ask whether the food had first been offered to idols or not. Even though people might have offered the food to idols, the food really belongs to God! The whole earth, and everything that lives and grows on the earth, belongs to God. Because the people are not eating this food in any of the temples, it has nothing to do with worshiping idols. It is just food, and therefore it is fine for the believers to eat it.

But if the believers eat in the house of an unbeliever, and someone happens to tell them, "This food has been offered to idols!" then the believers should not eat that food. The other person is worried that eating the food is not good, and therefore other believers should not eat it either. The other person's conscience tells them that eating the food is wrong. A conscience is a feeling that people have about what is right and wrong. The believers at this dinner should not eat the food because of the guilty feeling, or conscience, of the other person. They should not eat it even though they themselves do not think it is wrong.

Stop here and discuss: How do you, in your language, talk about the guilty feelings that people have inside about whether something is right or wrong to do? Pause this audio here.

Then we hear again something that the Corinthians are probably saying. The Corinthians say, "But why should other people tell me what to do? I am free to do what I want. If I think something is right, why should someone else judge me and say that I am wrong? And if I thank God for the food that I eat, how can anyone else then say that it is wrong to eat that food?"

But Paul responds to this and says, "You should do everything for the glory of God. Eat something if it gives honor to God, but do not eat it if it will not bring honor to God!"

Paul tells the believers that the believers have to think about all the people around them. Jewish people live in the believers' community. Jewish people worship the same God as the Christians, but Jewish people do not know Jesus. Many Greek people also live in the believers' community, because Corinth is in Greece. In this case, Greek people means all the people who do not know either God or Jesus. The believers should not do anything that would make it more difficult for Jews and unbelievers to begin to follow Jesus.

Also, the believers should not do anything that makes it more difficult for any other believer in the church to follow and obey Jesus.

The believers should do what Paul is doing. Paul tries not to offend anybody. Paul does not want to hurt anybody's feelings or make anybody angry. Paul always tries to please other people, or to make them happy. Paul does not think about what is good for Paul. Paul thinks about what is good for other people. Paul does this because Paul wants many people to get to know Jesus and he wants God to save these people. By thinking so much about other people, Paul is following the example of Jesus. And Paul wants the believers in Corinth to follow Paul's example.

Stop here and do this activity: Play a game. Have one person stand somewhere where the rest of the group cannot see that person. Have another person stand somewhere where they can see the first person and can also see the rest of the group. For instance, one person stands outside, another person stands inside the door, and the rest of the people stand inside. Then, have the person who is outside do some actions. Whatever that person does, the person in the middle should do the same thing. And then the rest of the people should do whatever they see the person in the middle doing. Pause this audio here.

Now that you have done this game, you can think of Jesus being the person outside. Paul is the person in the middle. Paul does what he sees Jesus do. The other people are the believers in Corinth. These people see what Paul is doing, and these people do the same thing as Paul.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has one part.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers in Corinth who think that they can do anything
- The believers in Corinth who think it is not good to eat food that has been offered to idols
- People who buy and sell in the market
- An unbeliever who invites a believer to dinner
- Greeks, or unbelievers, who do not know Christ
- Jews
- Christians, who are the Church of God
- Christ, the Lord
- And God

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

First, act out that people buy food at the market.

Pause the drama.

Ask the people who are buying food, "What are you thinking or feeling?" People may answer things like:

- "I am not sure whether I can buy this food. I wonder if this food has been offered to idols?" or
- "I do not want to buy this food if it has been offered to idols. I feel very guilty if I eat such food;" or
- "I do not care whether the food has been offered to idols or not! All food belongs to God."

Act out that an unbeliever invites some believers for a meal at the unbeliever's house. Act out that they begin to eat, but then someone else tells the believers that the food has been sacrificed to idols. One person can decide not to eat the food, and the other person can decide to keep eating.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person who keeps eating, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person may answer things like:

- "I am free! I can do whatever I want! I know that this food has no special power. I will just keep eating it. I am way too spiritual to think that eating this food is wrong!"

Ask the person who stops eating, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person may answer things like:

- "I know that I could eat this food if I wanted to. But I will not do it, because this other believer does not like it. It is more important that I love them than that I eat this food."

Ask the person who told the other people that the food was offered to idols, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person may answer things like:

- "I am really confused. Why do some of them still eat this food? Do they not know that it is wrong? I really feel bad about this."

You could now act out the conversation that the proud believers have with Paul. On the side, the other people can do the actions to buy and eat food.

Act out that the proud believers say, "We can do anything we want!" Paul responds, "But not everything is good to do." The believers say, "We can do anything we want!"

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the proud believers, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The people may answer things like:

- "We are free people! We are very spiritual. We can do whatever we want."

Paul responds, "But not everything will help other people. You should not just think about what is good for you. You should think about what is good for other people. You can eat everything that you buy in the market. You do not have to worry whether the food has been offered to idols. All the food in the world belongs to God! And if an unbeliever asks you to come for dinner, you do not have to worry about the food either. You can just eat it. But, if another believer sees this and tells you that the food has been offered to idols, you should stop eating! You should stop, not because you think it is wrong, but because the other person thinks it is wrong."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the proud believers, "What are you thinking or feeling?" People may answer things like:

- "I do not like what Paul says. I am very spiritual. I think that the people who are worried about the food are very weak. They are not very good Christians."

The believers respond, "But I am free to eat what I want! Why do I have to give up my freedom if someone else feels that what I do is wrong? I thank God for the food that I eat. Why should anyone then say that I am wrong?"

Paul responds, "You should do everything for the glory of God. Eat if it gives glory to God, but do not eat if it does not bring glory to God. The things that you do should not upset Jews or unbelievers, and the things you do should certainly not upset other believers. You should do what I am doing. I always try to please other people."

I do not want to do things that are good for me, but I want to do things that are good for other people. I do this because I want God to save many people. I am doing what Christ is doing. You should do what I do."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person may answer things like:

- "I hope that the Corinthians will listen to me. I hope that they will follow my example."

Ask the people playing the proud believers, "What are you thinking or feeling?" People may answer things like:

- "I realize now that I was wrong. I was very proud. I thought that if I ate food that was offered to idols, God would be very pleased with me. But I have to learn to love my brothers and sisters. I should not look down on them and think that they are weak;" or
- "If this is what God wants me to do, then I want to do it. I want to follow the example of Paul."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

The believers in Corinth say that everything is **lawful**. The believers means that according to the law, the believers can do whatever they like. The believers probably do not think about a particular law, like the law of God or the law of the country. The believers just mean to say that there is no rule at all that says the believers *can not* do anything.

Paul says that not everything is helpful, or **beneficial**. Something that is beneficial means doing some good. In chapter 6, verse 12, of this letter, Paul uses almost this exact same sentence. In that passage, Paul was talking to people who thought that it was okay to sleep with a prostitute. Use the same phrase as you have used in that passage.

Paul uses the special language of **building people up**. If you are building a person up, you are helping that person to become spiritually stronger. You help that person to have more faith and to do more of what God wants. Paul has used the same words when Paul began his teaching in chapter eight about eating food offered to idols. Use the same words or phrases that you have used there.

The **marketplace** is a place where people buy and sell things. People can eat the things that they buy in the marketplace without questioning their **conscience**. This means the people do not have to think about whether it is right or wrong. A conscience is a guilty feeling that people have inside them. Later in the passage, Paul tells the proud believers that the believers should not eat the food because of the other person's conscience. This means the believers should not eat the food if another person feels that eating the food is wrong. If that person would eat the food, that person would feel guilty about eating the food. Use the same word or phrase for conscience that you have used in previous passages. The word conscience is in the Master Glossary.

The believers do not have to worry about the food they eat, because the **earth and its abundance** belong to the Lord. This means that everything that grows on earth belongs to God. Food does not belong to idols, but that food belongs to God. God is the one who created the food.

Stop here and decide what word or phrase you will use to say "the earth and everything in it" in your language. Pause this audio here.

The **Lord** refers to God or Jesus. A Lord is someone who is a master over other people, who has full authority, and who deserves for people to give him respect. God is called the Lord because God has authority over the whole world. Jesus is also Lord. Use the same word as you have used in earlier passages. The word Lord is in the Master Glossary.

An **unbeliever** may invite a believer to dinner. An unbeliever means someone who does not know and follow Jesus. Use the same word as you have used in previous passages. For more information, believer is in the Master Glossary.

Someone may say to another person having a meal, "This food is from a **sacrifice**." A sacrifice means something that has been offered to God, but in this case it means food that has been offered to an idol. The word sacrifice is in the Master Glossary, but use the same word or phrase that you have used in previous passages to talk about food offered to idols.

Whatever the believers do, they should do only things that give **glory**, or honor, to God. Use the same word or phrase as you have used in previous passages. The word glory is in the Master Glossary.

The believers should not **give offense** to Jews, Greeks, or to the church of God. This means the believers should not insult, or make angry, other people. The believers should not cause other people to stumble, or cause them spiritual damage.

Stop here and discuss how you will say that people should not "give offense" to other people. Pause this audio here.

Jews refers to the same people as the Israelites. Use the same word as you have used in previous passages. The word Jew is in the Master Glossary.

Greeks are people who belong to the country called Greece. The city of Corinth is in Greece. Greek culture had a lot of influence on other countries. Over time, people called other people who followed the Greek customs Greeks even when those people did not come from the country of Greece. A good Jew would not adopt Greek culture, because Greek culture involved idol worship. Therefore, people often used the word Greek to talk about any person who was not a Jew. Use the same word for Greeks as you have used in previous passages. Look up Greeks in the Master Glossary for more information.

People should not give offense to the **Church** of God. The Church of God means all the people who are believers together. People should not offend any of their fellow believers. Paul talks about the Church of God, because God is the master of the church. Use the same word for church as you have used in other passages. The word church is in the Master Glossary.

Paul tries to please everyone so that God may **save** those people, or bring those people into a right relationship with God. For more information about salvation, see the Master Glossary.

Paul tells the believers in Corinth to **imitate** Paul. If you imitate someone, you do the same things as that person does. Paul imitates **Christ**, and the believers should imitate Paul. When the believers imitate Paul, they are also imitating Christ. Use the same word for Christ as you have used in previous passages. The word Christ is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 11:2–16

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the previous passage, Paul spoke about the issue of food offered to idols. Paul told the Corinthian believers that though they had freedom in Christ, they must honor God with their behavior. The believers must also do what is best for other people rather than thinking only of themselves. Paul encouraged the Corinthians to follow Paul's example, just like Paul follows Christ's example.

In this passage, Paul addresses the first of several issues related to gathering for worship. Paul begins by praising the believers for following the teachings or traditions Paul had taught the believers. We do not know exactly which teachings or traditions Paul speaks about. Then Paul begins to correct the things that are not going well.

As with the previous passages, Paul's primary concern is that during worship, people should behave in a way that brings glory to God. Just like Paul has been telling the believers to think of other people, Paul also wants people to be considerate of how their actions affect others as they worship God. Believers in Jesus must be

respectful of others, even though the believers have freedom in Christ and no longer have to follow all the laws of Moses.

You will remember that though Corinth was located in the country of Greece, during this time the Romans ruled Corinth. People followed Roman cultural practices. The way that people styled their hair was a symbol of their sexual behavior and attitudes. A person with long hair was usually a symbol that they were sexually immoral. If a person shaved their head, it was a sign that the person was celibate or abstained from having sexual relations with anyone. A man who cut his hair short, or a woman who wore a head covering or veil, was telling people that they were in a committed sexual relationship, probably as a married person.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what does a person's appearance tell you about them? What parts of a person's appearance are symbols in your culture that show that a person is respectable? What symbols show that the person has bad character? Pause this audio here.

Roman law protected women who wore a veil or head covering. The head covering was a sign that she was a respectable woman with self-discipline. If a man made sexual advances toward a woman wearing a head covering, the governing authorities could arrest the man and punish him. In this culture, a woman showed honor or disrespect toward the people close to her by how she dressed and kept her hair. If a woman wore a head covering, she honored her husband, children, parents, and siblings. If a woman did not wear a head covering, she brought shame and dishonor to her family.

Men in Roman culture usually did not wear any kind of head covering. There are a couple of exceptions to this. A man who mourned the death of someone might cover his head. It is possible that men who made a sacrifice to a pagan god might also cover their heads. We do not know why Paul mentions head covering for men since men did not normally wear head coverings in Roman culture.

Paul stresses the importance of relationships within the community and the importance of having a structure in which the different parts of the community can relate to one another in unity and order. Paul shows that every relationship has different roles, priorities, and responsibilities. For example, a man is responsible to Christ, a woman is responsible to a man, and Christ is responsible to God. The most important thing to remember here is that this entire passage is talking about relationships and how to show honor to each other within the cultures where you live.

Paul explains that though both men and women can pray and prophecy, or give messages from God, both men and women must respect each other and the roles that God has given them. Paul is explaining that even though they are all believers in the same church, or same body of Christ, they are still uniquely men and women. They must respond as men and women in Christ. Paul reminds the believers that God created man in God's own image. God creates the man in order to bring God praise and honor. God created the woman from man. The woman is also made in the image of God, but the woman also reflects the glory, or honor, of man. Paul is instructing people to dress in a way that does not draw attention to themselves but honors God. Paul reminds the believers that men and women are not independent from each other, but men and women need each other. Most importantly, God gives life to everyone and everything.

Paul makes it clear that this instruction is not Paul's opinion but represents traditional teaching in all the churches.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul praises the Corinthian believers for following Paul's teaching. Paul then corrects the believers on the issue of respecting the roles and responsibilities that God has established. Paul instructs the believers to honor God with how each believer presents themselves while praying and prophesying.

In the second part: Paul affirms the differences between man and woman. Paul says that man is made in the image of God and reflects the glory of God. God made woman from man, so woman also reflects the glory of God

and the glory of man. Because of this, a woman should dress modestly when she worships. Men and women are not independent but need one another. God created both man and woman.

In the third part: Paul asks two questions to emphasize Paul's point. Paul does not expect an answer. Paul tells the believers that even if the believers disagree, this is the practice of the church.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Christ
- God
- Men in the Corinthian church
- Women in the Corinthian church
- And angels

Paul begins this passage by praising the Corinthian believers for the way the believers have followed the teachings and traditions that Paul gave to the believers. Paul uses a strong word in which Paul gives the believers full credit for remembering and following the teaching exactly as Paul gave it to them. However, Paul then shifts to correcting the believers for some things that are not proper.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate the transition from giving praise to giving correction without making the praise weaker. Pause this audio here.

In the first part, Paul says that Christ is the head or leader of man, man is the head or leader of woman, and God is the head or leader of Christ. Paul is using special language here. In the original language, Paul uses the word for "head" as in the head of a body. Paul uses the image of a body frequently in this letter. In a later passage, Paul will explain how the various parts of the body work together. Paul uses the word for a physical head of a body because it has several meanings, all of which are important in this passage. The head leads the rest of the body. The head is the source of life for the rest of the body. A body cannot function without a head. The head is the top and most honored part of the body. The head has a special role within the body. The head has special responsibilities within the body.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate the idea of the head so that people will understand that this is a special role that includes leadership, honor, and responsibility. Because Paul's exact meaning is unclear, we recommend using the word for the head of a person's physical body, if possible. Pause this audio here.

In this passage, Paul refers to man and woman. In the original language, Paul used the general words for a male person and a female person. Some translations have chosen to use the words for husband and wife when Paul speaks about the relationship between a man and a woman. In the original language, there is only one word for both man and husband. There is also only one word for both woman and wife. We recommend that you use the general word for man and woman in your language.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate the words for man and woman in this passage. Pause this audio here.

Both men and women prayed and prophesied during worship. Paul says that when a man or woman prays or prophesies during public worship, that man or woman should do it in a way that does not dishonor their head. In Roman culture, a person's hairstyle was a symbol of their character. Since respectable men did not cover their heads or wear their hair long, Christian men should show that they are respectable when they pray and prophesy by not wearing a head covering. However, respectable women wore their hair long with some form of hair covering or veil. So Paul told Christian women that they should look like respectable women when they pray and prophesy, otherwise the women would bring shame on their heads—in other words, they would bring shame on their leaders and ultimately on Christ and God.

In part two, Paul reminds the Corinthians about the creation of man and woman. Paul says that God made man in God's image and that man reflects the glory of God. God made the first woman from the first man, so the woman also reflects the glory of God and the glory of man. We know from the creation story that God made

woman because the man was alone. Unlike the animals, the man did not have a female partner. Therefore, God made the woman for the man. For these reasons, a woman should dress modestly when she worships. Paul says that it is a sign of authority. It is unclear if the woman's head covering is a sign that the woman is submitting to those who have authority over her or if her modest dress as a believing woman gives her the authority to pray and prophecy in public.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate the sign of authority in this passage. Since Paul's meaning is unclear, translate this idea literally without giving an interpretation. Pause this audio here.

Paul mentions that the woman covers her head because of the angels who are present when God's people worship God. It is unclear why Paul says this. Paul believed that angels were present during the worship services. Paul probably believed that angels were concerned with good order and behavior in worship.

After explaining that there are differences between men and women, Paul returns to the theme of people needing each other. Paul says that for those who belong to the Lord, women are not independent or separate from men, and men are not independent from women. Paul gives an example of this: Though the first woman came from a man, all other men are born from a woman. Most importantly, God gives life to everyone and everything. Everything actually comes from God!

In part three, Paul asks two questions that Paul does not expect the believers to answer. Paul uses these questions to make a strong point that Paul thinks should be obvious to the Corinthian believers. Paul asks, "Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not everyday life teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to that man, but that if a woman has long hair, that hair brings the woman honor?"

Paul hopes that the believers will answer "No" to the first question and "Yes" to the second question. In these questions, Paul is saying even though people have freedom in Christ, people must respect one another and honor the structure or order that God has established.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate these questions. If you do not ask these kinds of questions in your culture, you can translate the questions as strong statements. For example:

- "It is not proper for a woman to pray with her head uncovered;" or
- "You can see that long hair is shameful for a man;" or
- "You can see that long hair brings a woman honor." Pause this audio here.

Paul makes it clear that this is not Paul's opinion, or a commandment, but that it represents traditional teaching in all the churches. When Paul says, "We have no other practice," it is unclear to whom the word "we" refers. It is possible that Paul is saying that Paul and the other teachers who work with him teach this. Another possibility is that Paul refers to the church where Paul is currently located. Paul could be referring to churches or Christians in general. One possible way to translate this passage is, "Neither I nor the other churches of God have another custom than this."

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Christ
- God
- Men in the Corinthian church
- Women in the Corinthian church
- And angels

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers, "I must give you credit because you have done well in remembering the teachings and traditions I have given to you. But there is one thing I want you to understand: Christ is the head of man, man is the head of woman, and God is the head of Christ. A man dishonors his head if the man prays or prophesies with his head covered."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am pleased that you are following the instructions that I gave you;" or
- "It is important that everyone understands that God has created a structure and an order for everything. God wants us to have unity and order;" or
- "Men need to behave in respectful ways, especially when they worship God."

Ask the person playing a Corinthian man, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "It is true. We do not normally wear anything on our head, except maybe if we are in mourning. Worshiping Jesus is a time for rejoicing, not mourning;" or
- "I have seen some pagan worshipers cover their heads. We definitely do not want to dishonor Jesus by acting like the pagans."

Paul says, "But a woman dishonors her head if she prays or prophesies with her head uncovered. If a woman refuses to wear a head covering, she should cut off her hair or shave her head! But since she will bring shame on herself and her family if she cuts off her hair, a woman should wear a covering."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing a Corinthian woman, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "Paul is right. If I do not dress properly in public, people will think badly about me. My family will be ashamed of me;" or
- "I thought we have freedom in Christ. Why should I have to wear something on my head when a man does not have to?" or
- "I would never want to cut my hair off or shave my head. It will give people the wrong idea about me. Besides, my hair is beautiful!"

Paul says, "Man must not cover his head when man worships, because God made man in God's image and man reflects the glory of God, or brings honor to God. God made the first woman from the first man, so woman also reflects the glory of God and the glory of man. God made woman as a helper for man. For these reasons, and because of the angels, a woman should dress modestly when she worships as a sign of authority."

"As believers in the Lord Jesus, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. We know this because as the first woman was made from man, now man is born of woman. God is the one who created everything."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want my people to realize that they need each other. One person is not more important than the other person, even if each person may have different responsibilities;" or
- "I want people to see my image when they look at people. People will see my glory when my followers honor me in the way they worship me."

Paul says, "Think about this: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Of course it is not. Does not the nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, that man's hair causes him to lose honor? And does not the nature of things teach you that if a woman has long hair, that woman's hair brings her honor? God gave the woman long hair as a covering. If anyone wants to argue with us and disagree about this practice, we have no other custom among us and neither do the other churches of God."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing a Corinthian woman, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I think I understand Paul's point now. Paul has made a very logical argument;" or
- "I did not realize that this is what the women in other churches do. We need to act in ways that bring honor to ourselves, bring honor to our families, and especially bring honor to God."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul tells the Corinthians, "I **commend** or praise you." Paul is telling the Corinthians that they have done well. Paul gives the Corinthians full credit for following the instructions that Paul had given them. This is not the same type of praise as when a person praises God.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **commend** or praise. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the believers that **Christ** is the head of every man and God is the head of Christ. Use the same word for Christ that you have used in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about Christ.

Paul says that every man who **prays** or **prophesies** with his head covered dishonors his head. When a person prays, that person is talking with God. A person can pray in public or in private. In this passage Paul is speaking about praying in public worship.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **pray**. Look up **pray** in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Prophecy is when a person gives a message from God. Through the Holy Spirit, God gives a believer a special knowledge or insight that is for the good of the church. The person can give a prophecy that gives a teaching, a warning, or a message about the future.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **prophecy**. Look up **prophecy** in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul reminds the believers that man is the image and glory of God. God created all people in the **image of God**. This does not mean that people physically look like God. This means that God created people with the same qualities as God, such as the ability to think, to love, to appreciate and create beautiful things, and to do what is good. People represent God on the earth.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "image of God." Look up **image of God** in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

God made man to reflect the **glory** of God. When people look at man, people can see the beauty, greatness, and power of God. In this way, man honors God. Use the same word for **glory** that you have used in previous passages. For more information, look up **glory** in the Master Glossary.

Paul said that because a woman reflects the glory of man, and because of the **angels**, a woman must have a sign of **authority** on her head. Angels are spiritual beings who are servants of God. Authority is the right a person has to make decisions or to do something. Use the same word for **angels** and **authority** that you have used in previous passages. Look up **angels** and **authority** in the Master Glossary for more information.

Paul says that "in the **Lord**," or "among the Lord's people," women are not independent of men and men are not independent of women. In this instance, Lord refers to the Lord Jesus. Use the same word for **Lord** that you have used in previous passages. For more information about **Lord**, refer to the Master Glossary.

Paul states that this is the practice or tradition in the churches of God. A **church** is a community of Jesus followers. Use the same word for **church** that you have used in previous passages. For more information about **church**, refer to the Master Glossary.

1 Corinthians 11:2–16

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 11:17–26

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 11:17–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the previous passage, Paul gave instructions for how to dress properly when the Corinthian believers gather to worship God. Paul tells men that the men should not cover their heads during worship. However, Paul says that the women must cover their heads. Otherwise, Paul says the women will bring dishonor or shame to themselves, their families, and ultimately to God. Paul tells the believers that the believers should present themselves in respectful ways so that people will glorify and honor God.

In the last passage, Paul praised the Corinthians for following the instructions and traditions that Paul gave them. However, Paul begins this passage by saying that Paul cannot praise the Corinthians for following the teachings Paul had given them regarding the Lord Jesus' Supper. You will remember that believers gather together to eat a special meal, which the believers call the Lord's Supper, to remember that God has promised the believers to rescue them from their sins. Paul has heard that the Corinthians are divided when they eat this meal. Paul probably got this information from people who spoke directly with Paul.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: When you have important information to share with someone who is far away, what are the different ways that you can use to get that information to the person? In your culture, which of these ways do people trust the most? Pause this audio here.

Paul told the Corinthians that the Corinthians behave in a way that goes against the purpose of the Lord's Supper. In fact, Paul says that when the believers meet together, the believers' behavior towards each other causes more harm to each other than it helps each other. Paul has repeated many times that believers must build up one another and work for the best of others. However, some of the Corinthian believers are creating more divisions when they gather for worship. Paul is talking about a different kind of division than following different leaders. Some Corinthians are creating divisions based on their status in society or how much money they have. Instead of caring for and honoring one another, the richer Corinthians are treating poorer Corinthians in a shameful or dishonoring way. Paul is not happy about the way the Corinthians are acting and creating division. But Paul admits that at least when there are divisions, everyone can clearly see who genuinely follows God and who does not. Paul may have been thinking about what Jesus said about people being divided against each other because they believed in Jesus.

Paul tells the Corinthians that their gathering was not the Lord's Supper because the Corinthians did not honor and love one another or bring glory to God. Many people only thought of themselves. These people would eat and drink too much while other people were hungry. During this time, it was common for believers to gather for a regular meal, which ended with eating the bread and drinking the cup of wine of the Lord's Supper. In Corinth, instead of a community meal, everyone had private meals during a gathering of the church. Paul told

the Corinthians that if they wanted to eat this way, then the Corinthians should go and eat in their own homes, not at a church gathering.

Paul asks a question that Paul does not expect the Corinthians to answer. Paul says "Do you not have your own houses to eat and drink in?" The obvious answer is "Yes," so this shows that Paul was probably talking to the wealthier believers since they would be the only ones who owned their own homes. We know from the Book of Acts that many churches met in people's homes. The wealthy people in Corinth would have Roman-style homes, which included a dining room and an atrium, or gathering room. People would recline to eat formal meals, so depending on the size of the dining room, from 9 to 20 people could eat in that room. According to Roman custom, the host would seat people by their importance in the community. The host would also serve better food to the host's more important guests. The atrium was a much larger room where people would gather. About 50 people could gather in the atrium. The atrium is probably where the church met for worship. Some scholars believe that the rich Corinthians were coming early to eat in the dining room of the host. When the poorer believers arrived, these poorer believers could not find space in the dining room where the other people were feasting. The poorer Corinthians would not have been able to contribute the best food, and it appears the wealthier people did not leave food for the other people.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Where do people normally eat in your home? How many people can comfortably eat in that space? When you have more people than can fit in that room or space, where do you gather? How do you decide who gets food and who does not? Pause this audio here.

Paul then asks the question, "Do you despise the church and humiliate those people who have nothing?" Paul is telling the Corinthians that when a homeowner opens their house for the church to worship, it is no longer a home but a worship space. The people must follow the rules of God's community rather than the social rules of society. Unlike social rules or customs, which change from place to place, the church must follow the teachings of Jesus. Paul repeats that Paul cannot praise the Corinthians for this kind of behavior.

Paul reminds the Corinthians that Paul had already taught the Corinthians what Jesus instructed regarding the Lord's Supper. Paul simply retells the story of the moment when Jesus started the Lord's Supper tradition. Paul does this to show the Corinthians that what the Corinthians were doing at their gatherings did not resemble what Jesus did and instructed Jesus' followers to do. Paul reminds the Corinthians of what happened on the night that one of Jesus' disciples betrayed Jesus. Jesus ate a festival meal, called the Passover Meal, with Jesus' disciples. The Passover helped people remember how God rescued the Israelites from slavery. In a similar way, Jesus told Jesus' disciples that this meal would remind the disciples of how Jesus rescued the disciples from the slavery to sin. Later, the believers in Jesus regularly ate this meal together and called it the Lord's Supper.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What celebrations or events in your culture are reminders of a past event? Tell the story of the past event that you celebrate. Pause this audio here.

Paul reminded the Corinthians that Jesus declared a new covenant, or solemn promise between God and people who trusted in Jesus. People who accepted this new covenant became part of the covenant community. Every time believers participate in the Lord's Supper, the believers tell again the story of the Lord Jesus' death until Jesus returns. Paul showed how different the first Lord's Supper was from what the Corinthians were doing. The Corinthians were not imitating Christ in their actions during the Lord's Supper.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 11:17–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul tells the Corinthians that Paul cannot praise or commend the Corinthians for the way the Corinthians gather for the Lord's Supper. The Corinthians are creating divisions when they meet. The Corinthians make the situation worse, rather than better, when the Corinthians gather together.

In the second part: Paul tells the Corinthians that although the Corinthians say they are having the Lord's Supper, what the Corinthians do does not resemble the Lord's Supper. Some people eat and drink a lot without

sharing with other people who are hungry. Paul says that the Corinthians dishonor the church and bring shame on their fellow believers.

In the third part: Paul reminds the Corinthians that Paul gave the Corinthians instructions about the Lord's Supper. Paul recalls for the Corinthians the words Jesus used at the first Lord's Supper. Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Lord's Supper is a meal to remember what Jesus did for the believers. The Corinthians are telling again the story of the Lord Jesus' death each time the believers share in the Lord's Supper.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Rich Corinthian believers
- Poor Corinthian believers
- And the Lord Jesus

In the last passage, Paul praised the Corinthians for following the instructions and traditions that Paul gave them. However, Paul begins this passage by saying that Paul cannot praise or commend the Corinthians for following the teachings Paul had given them about the Lord's Supper. Paul says twice that Paul does not praise or commend the Corinthians. Paul tells the Corinthians that they harm one another rather than help each other when the Corinthians meet for worship.

Paul tells the Corinthians how they harm one another. When Paul says, "In the first place," Paul is doing this to emphasize Paul's point. Paul does not mention a "second" point. Another way to say this is, "most importantly."

Stop here and discuss: What do people do in your language to emphasize a very important point? How will you translate the meaning of "in the first place" in your language? Pause this audio here.

When Paul says, "I hear that there are divisions," Paul is telling the Corinthians that someone reported this to Paul directly, most likely in person. Paul responds to the report by saying that Paul believes that some of what these people say is true. Paul may have chosen to respond like this for a couple of reasons. First, Paul heard this from someone Paul trusted, but Paul did not experience it himself, so Paul wanted to be cautious. Also, Paul might be trying to be a wise pastor or leader by telling the church that Paul knows that not everyone is causing the division. Paul is only confronting the people who are causing the problem.

Stop here and discuss: What do you say to let people know that you have received information from a reliable source? In your culture, how do you talk about a problem with a group when you know that only a few people are causing the problem? How will you translate the idea that Paul believes the report, but Paul also understands that only some people are causing the problem? Pause this audio here.

Paul then seems to contradict himself. Paul states that divisions might be helpful! Divisions make it clear which people are showing true faith in God. Paul may be suggesting that God planned these divisions. You will remember that Jesus said people will be against those people who truly follow Jesus. In an earlier passage, Paul told the Corinthians that God will test each person's actions, and everyone will see the good things that really remain.

The Corinthians thought they were eating the Lord's Supper, or the meal that followers of Jesus eat together to remember the death of the Lord Jesus. Paul told the Corinthians that what the Corinthians were doing did not resemble the Lord's Supper at all. The Corinthians were behaving in a way that did not honor Jesus. People who eat the Lord's Supper together remember what Jesus did so that they could become God's people. Some people ate their own meal without sharing it with other people. Some people had nothing to eat, while other people had so much that they became drunk from the wine.

Paul asks the believers a series of questions that Paul does not expect the believers to answer. Paul uses these questions as a way to let the Corinthians know that Paul is very unhappy and angry with the believers. Paul is rebuking the believers with these questions. When Paul asks, "Do you not have houses to eat or drink in?" Paul is telling the believers that they can eat and drink in their own homes. When Paul asks, "Do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?" Paul is telling these people that they must think the

community of believers is not important because they are disrespecting the community. The poor believers feel ashamed because of the way the other believers are treating the poor believers.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate these questions. If you do not use these types of questions in your language, you will need to make them into statements. Pause this audio here.

Paul's next question, "What shall I say to you?" shows Paul's frustration with the believers. Paul is so disappointed with the believers that Paul almost does not know what to say.

Stop here and discuss: How do you express extreme frustration and disappointment in your language? Discuss how you will translate this idea in your language. Pause this audio here.

Paul asks the believers one final question, but Paul also gives the believers the answer to that question: "Shall I praise you for this? No, I will not!" Paul says that the Corinthians are behaving in a way that requires Paul to rebuke the Corinthians rather than praise them.

Paul tells the Corinthians that Paul is passing on, or teaching the Corinthians, what the Lord gave Paul to teach. In the original language, Paul speaks in a way that shows that this is a tradition that Jesus started with Jesus' disciples. The disciples themselves, who were present at the meal, probably gave this information to Paul. Paul tells the story of the first Lord's Supper in a similar way that Luke told it in Luke's gospel. You will remember that Luke traveled with Paul on some of Paul's journeys.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate the idea that Paul received Paul's instructions about the Lord's Supper from disciples who were there with Jesus at the first Lord's Supper. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and do this activity: If you have translated the Gospel of Luke, listen to your translation of Luke 22:17–20 or have a member of your group tell this story from Luke. Pause this audio here.

Paul simply retells the moment when Jesus started the Lord's Supper tradition. Jesus did this on the night that Judas betrayed Jesus. Jesus and Jesus' disciples enjoyed the Passover meal together. During the meal, Jesus took some bread and a cup of wine and gave new meanings to the symbols. Jesus thanked God for the bread and broke the bread into two or more pieces. Jesus said, "This bread is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the original language, the action here either means that the bread is the body, or that the bread is like, or is a symbol of, Jesus' body. Next, Jesus took a cup of wine in the same way as the bread; that is, Jesus picked the bread up and gave thanks to God for the bread. Then Jesus said, "This cup is the new and different kind of covenant, or agreement between God and people. I make this covenant by shedding my blood, or dying. When you drink it, do this in remembrance of me." Paul tells the Corinthians that when the Corinthians eat the bread and drink the cup of wine, they are telling others about the death of the Lord Jesus until Jesus returns. Paul says that when followers of Jesus celebrate the Lord's Supper together, and remember the meaning of the symbols, the followers of Jesus are retelling the story of Jesus' death for the sins of the world. You will remember that Jesus said that Jesus would eat this meal again when Jesus comes back to rule in God's kingdom.

Stop here and look at a picture of unleavened bread and a cup of wine. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 11:17–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Rich Corinthian believers
- Poor Corinthian believers
- And the Lord Jesus

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers, "I cannot commend or praise you because, when you gather as a church, you behave in ways that harm one another rather than help each other. I have heard that you are divided. I suppose there is some truth to this. Division can make it clear who is genuinely following Jesus and who is not."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am very disappointed in how you are treating one another;" or
- "I do not like it when God's people are divided. People are hurting one another rather than helping;" or
- "This is not good, but at least we can learn who is truly following Jesus."

Paul continues, "When you come together for worship, you claim to be eating the Lord Jesus' supper, but you are not! Some are going ahead and eating their own meal. Some are hungry, while others get drunk. You have your own homes to eat and drink in. What you are doing is dishonoring God and God's church. You are disrespecting your poorer brothers and sisters! I am not sure what to say. I definitely cannot praise you for this!"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing rich Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am ashamed that I have neglected my fellow believers;" or
- "We always have feasts like this. It is not my fault that some people get here after everything has been eaten;" or
- "Paul is right. We have not been treating one another with respect. We need to change things."

Ask the person playing poor Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am disappointed that I was not able to eat with the others;" or
- "I am sad that people are not treating me like a Christian brother. There seem to be many small groups instead of one Christian family."

Paul continues, "I will pass on to you the same instructions that the Lord Jesus gave to me. The night one of Jesus' disciples betrayed the Lord Jesus, Jesus took some bread and thanked God for it. Jesus broke the bread into pieces and said, 'This bread is my body given for you. Remember me when you eat this bread.' After the meal, Jesus took a cup of wine. Jesus picked it up and thanked God for it. Then Jesus said, 'This cup of wine is the new covenant between God and God's people. I make this covenant by shedding my blood. When you drink from this cup, do it in remembrance of me.'"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am concerned that the Corinthians do not understand how important the Lord's Supper is. The Corinthians should not eat this meal in the wrong way;" or
- "I thought the Corinthians knew about the beginning of the Lord's Supper. The Corinthians need to understand that this is not something I invented;" or
- "I need to explain this to the Corinthians just like those who were with the Lord Jesus that night described it to me."

Ask the person playing Jesus, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am sad that the Corinthians do not fully understand the importance of this meal;" or
- "I am happy that Paul is reminding the Corinthians about that special night. I want my people to always remember that I willingly gave my life to make this new covenant with God."

Paul tells the Corinthians, "Every time we eat the bread and drink the cup of wine, we are telling others about the Lord Jesus' death until he comes back."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am happy to now know exactly what this special meal means;" or
- "I need to honor the Lord Jesus and Jesus' death for us. We need to have the Lord's Supper in a proper way;" or
- "I am looking forward to the day that Jesus will come back, and we can have this meal with Jesus in person."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 11:17–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul tells the Corinthians that Paul will not praise or **commend** the Corinthians for following the instructions that Paul gave the Corinthians about the Lord's Supper. Use the same word or phrase for praise or commend that you used in the previous passage.

Paul says that when the Corinthian come together as a **church**, the believers are dividing into different groups. The church is the community of followers of Jesus. Use the same word for church that you have used for previous passages. For more information about church, refer to the Master Glossary.

Paul tells the Corinthians that it is not the **Lord's Supper** that the believers are eating. In this passage, Lord refers to the Lord Jesus. The first Lord's Supper took place when Jesus ate the Passover meal with Jesus' disciples before Jesus was crucified. When Christians eat the Lord's Supper, Christians are remembering the broken body and shed blood of Jesus when Jesus died for them.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for the **Lord's Supper**. For more information on Lord, refer to the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

During the first Lord's Supper, Jesus took a **cup of wine** and said, "This cup is the new covenant, or agreement, between God and God's people." Although Jesus only talks about a cup, everyone would know that this cup had wine in it. You may need to include the phrase "cup of wine" in your translation. People make wine from fermented grape juice. Wine in the Bible is usually red in color and can symbolize life, blood, joy, and celebration when people use the wine well.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **cup**, or **cup of wine**. If needed, look at a photo of a cup of wine. Look up wine in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

A **covenant** is a strong promise or agreement between people or groups of people. These people cannot break this promise.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **covenant**. Look up covenant in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

1 Corinthians 11:17–26

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 11:27–34

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 11:27–34 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the previous passage, Paul rebuked the Corinthian believers for their behavior during the Lord's Supper. Some Corinthians were eating too much and even getting drunk, while other Corinthians were hungry. Paul

reminds the Corinthians of the example of Jesus when Jesus had the first Lord's Supper. Jesus told the disciples to eat the bread and drink the cup of wine to remember the story of Jesus' death.

In this passage, Paul continues to talk about the Lord's Supper and to warn the Corinthians about taking the Lord's Supper in the wrong way. The Corinthians must be careful to eat the bread or drink from the cup of the Lord with the right attitude towards each other. Anyone who does not eat the Lord's Supper in the right way will be guilty of disrespect or dishonor toward the body and blood of Jesus that Jesus gave as a sacrifice. Paul says that each person must examine or test their own attitudes before that person eats the bread and drinks from the cup of wine. In other words, that person needs to think carefully about their attitudes and actions to make sure those attitudes and actions are right.

Stop here and tell a story of a time when you stopped to consider your actions or attitudes, and how this caused you to change what you were planning to do. Pause this audio here.

If people eat and drink without thinking about or honoring the body, God will punish those people because of the way those people eat and drink. We do not know if Paul refers to the body of believers, which is the church, or if Paul refers to the body of Jesus who died for the believers. In any case, the believers do not honor either Jesus or each other by the way the believers act. Paul tells the believers that some of the believers are sick and weak, and other believers have died because God has judged these believers for dishonoring the Lord Jesus in this way. Paul says that if we look at what is in our hearts before we eat and drink, God will not judge us. When the Lord judges or punishes us, the Lord is teaching and training us to learn to act in the way the Lord wants us to act. The Lord does this so that the Lord will not have to finally condemn, or punish, us along with people in the world who do not follow God at all.

Stop here and discuss this question: Tell of a time when a teacher or parent disciplined you for doing something wrong. How did you feel? How did the discipline change your behavior in the future? Pause this audio here.

Paul finishes Paul's discussion about the Lord's Supper with some final instructions. When Christians gather to eat either a fellowship meal or the Lord's Supper, the Christians should wait for everyone to arrive and then eat together. Paul is talking about more than just when the believers should start eating! Paul is telling the believers that it is very important to welcome and honor each other when they gather to eat, because the believers are all one community that worships and follows God together—the believers are one body!

Those believers who are too hungry to wait should eat at home before they come to the gathering. This way, God will not punish these believers for doing what is wrong. Paul had other things Paul wanted to tell the believers about the Lord's Supper. Paul will tell the believers when Paul comes to visit the believers.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 11:27–34 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul warns the believers about eating the Lord's Supper in the wrong way. People should examine their attitudes and actions before people eat the bread and drink from the cup of wine. If people eat or drink with the wrong motives, God will discipline or punish these people.

In the second part: Paul instructs the believers to participate in the Lord's Supper together. Paul promises to give the believers more directions about this when Paul comes to see the believers.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Corinthian believers
- Lord Jesus
- And God

Paul begins the first part by using a word that shows Paul is going to give the Corinthians things to consider based on what Paul has just said.

Stop here and discuss: What do people say or do in your language to let the listener know that the speaker is giving advice or suggestions based on what the speaker just said? How will you start this part of Paul's letter so people understand that Paul is giving instructions based on Paul's previous comments? Pause this audio here.

Paul says if anyone eats the bread or drinks the cup of wine in the Lord Jesus' meal in an unworthy manner, they are guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord Jesus. Paul refers to people who eat the meal in a careless way or in a way that is not proper. People need to participate in the meal in a way that honors Jesus and one another. Jesus died to rescue us from our sins, and Jesus wants believers to be united into one body. If believers are not eating the meal that remembers Jesus' death correctly, then the believers are not honoring Jesus or what Jesus did for us!

In this passage, Paul uses language that judges and lawyers use in a court of law. First, Paul says the believers are "guilty." A guilty person is responsible, according to the law, for what that person has caused to happen. Most scholars believe that Paul is saying that this person is responsible for the sin of disrespecting the body and blood of the Lord Jesus. Other scholars think Paul may also be saying that this person will be judged just like the people who killed Jesus will be judged. Because scholars are unsure of the meaning, you should translate this idea in a neutral way that allows for either meaning.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate in your language that the person is "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus." Pause this audio here.

Next, Paul says a person must examine or test themselves to make sure they are participating in the Lord's Supper with the right actions and attitudes. It is like that person is testing themselves by asking themselves questions like, "How do I feel towards my brothers and sisters in the church? Am I doing my best to follow Jesus?" This helps the person understand if they are taking the Lord's Supper with the right motives.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate this idea that a person must examine or test themselves before that person eats or drinks in the Lord's Supper. Pause this audio here.

Then Paul says that a person must discern or honor the body. In this case, a person needs to recognize or understand the importance of that person's relationship to the body. In other words, the person needs to honor the body! If a person eats and drinks without discerning or honoring the body, that person causes God to judge, or to punish, that person. Because Paul only says "body," and not "body and blood of Jesus," scholars do not agree on what Paul means by body. Some people believe that Paul is speaking about the Lord Jesus' body that Jesus sacrificed for us. Other people believe that Paul is speaking about the believers in the Lord Jesus, who are the church or body of Christ. Paul could also be talking about both things at the same time. Because people are unsure of the meaning, you should also translate this in a way that allows for both meanings. If in your language you must choose one idea, you should translate this to mean the actual body of the Lord Jesus.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate this idea of honoring the "body" in your translation. Pause this audio here.

Paul mentions that some people have become weak and sick because God has judged these people. God has judged other people, and they have fallen asleep. "Fallen asleep" is another way to say that someone has died.

Stop here and discuss: When you are being polite, how do you talk about the fact that someone has died? Decide as a group how you will say that some people have died. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that when God judges Christians, God judges those Christians with a disciplining type of judgment. Disciplining judgment is when someone, like a parent or teacher, corrects a child to teach that child. God disciplines Christians in this way so Christians will not be condemned when God judges and punishes the people in the world, or the people who do not trust God.

In the second part, Paul finishes Paul's discussion of the Lord's Supper. Paul has finished correcting the believers' bad behavior and will now give the believers some instructions. Paul uses a word in the original language that tells the believers that Paul is going to tell the believers what they need to do.

Stop here and discuss: What do you say or do in your language when you are about to give the results of your discussion? Discuss how you will translate Paul's transition from correction to instruction. Pause this audio here.

Paul calls the believers brothers. In the original language, Paul uses a general word for a person who is a family member, or who is like a family member. Paul is speaking to both men and women. Some translators have chosen to translate this as "brothers and sisters." Paul tells Paul's Christian brothers and sisters to wait for one another before they start to eat either a fellowship meal or the Lord's Supper. Paul is talking about more than just when the believers should start eating! Paul is telling the believers that it is very important to welcome and honor each other when the believers gather to eat.

Those believers who are too hungry to wait for everyone to arrive should eat at home before they come to the gathering. This way, God will not punish these believers for doing what is wrong. Paul also wants to tell these believers other things about the Lord's Supper. Paul will tell the believers when Paul comes to visit the believers.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 11:27-34 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Corinthian believers
- Lord Jesus
- And God

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul wants the Corinthians to consider the importance of what Paul has just told the believers about the Lord's Supper. Paul warns the believers, "I want you to know that God will judge whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord's Supper in a careless or improper way. God will consider them guilty of dishonoring the body

and blood of the Lord Jesus. So, each person should examine themselves before eating the bread and drinking the cup of wine."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I love the Corinthians! I need to warn the Corinthians about how serious this matter is;" or
- "The Corinthians need to know that God will judge them for their careless behavior and attitudes;" or
- "I want to give the Corinthians some practical advice to help them do better."

Paul explains, "If you eat the bread or drink the cup of wine without honoring the body, you are bringing God's judgment on yourself. Some of you have received God's judgment for this. Some of you are sick and weak, while still others have died."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "Wow, this is serious. I do not want to be judged like this. I need to be careful how I participate in the Lord's Supper;" or
- "I wonder if this is why I have been so sick lately. I must repent of how I have treated the Lord's body and my fellow believers."

Paul continues, "If we examine ourselves, God will not judge us like this. However, when God judges us, God is disciplining and correcting us so we will not be condemned like the rest of the world."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I love my children and want what is best for them," or
- "I must correct my children so that they will escape the judgment of the rest of the world;" or
- "Paul is giving my children good advice."

Finally, Paul says, "So my brothers and sisters, when you gather for the Lord's Supper, wait for everyone to arrive before you begin. If you are really hungry, you should eat at home beforehand. If you do this, you will not bring God's judgment on yourselves when you meet. I have more to tell you about this, but it can wait until I come to see you."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am happy that Paul has given us such good, practical advice;" or
- "These are good ideas. I will eat at home so that I do not make these mistakes again;" or
- "I wonder what else Paul needs to tell us. I hope that it is not as serious as this."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 11:27–34 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul continues speaking about the Lord's Supper. Paul tells the Corinthians that anyone who eats the bread or drinks the cup of **wine** in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner is guilty of sinning against the body and **blood** of the Lord. "Cup of the **Lord**" is the cup of wine that people drank during the Lord's Supper. When Paul says "Lord" in this passage, Paul is talking about the Lord Jesus. Use the same words or phrases for cup of wine, Lord, and blood that you have used in previous passages. For more information about wine, Lord, and blood, refer to the Master Glossary if needed.

A **guilty** person is responsible, according to the law, for what that person has caused to happen. Paul says this person is guilty against, or dishonors, the death of the Lord Jesus. Although the word **sin** is not used in the original language, you may need to say that the people are guilty of sinning against the Lord Jesus. If so, use the same words for guilty and sin that you have used in previous passages. Refer to sin in the Master Glossary for more information.

Paul said that if a person eats the bread and drinks the cup of wine without honoring the body, that person is eating or drinking **judgment** on themselves. In other words, God will judge the person for doing something wrong. Judgment is when a person in authority decides that someone is wrong or guilty, and the person in authority punishes the guilty person for the guilty person's wrongdoing. Use the same word for judgment, when it refers to punishment, that you have used in previous passages.

Paul calls the Corinthian believers **brothers**. In the original language, Paul uses a general word for a person who is a family member, or who is like a family member. Paul is speaking to both men and women. Some translators have chosen to translate this as "brothers and sisters." Use the same word for brothers that you have used in previous passages.

1 Corinthians 11:27-34

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the previous passages, Paul spoke about a report that Paul had heard about how the Corinthians disrespected one another and the Lord Jesus during the Lord's Supper. Paul instructs the Corinthians to examine themselves

so that God will not judge the believers for dishonoring the body of Jesus. Paul instructs the believers to wait for one another and to honor one another whenever the believers gather to eat the Lord's Supper.

In this passage, Paul addresses another issue the Corinthians asked Paul about in the Corinthians' previous letter to Paul. The Corinthians had questions or concerns about special gifts and abilities that the Spirit of God gives to people. Paul wants the Corinthians to know about these things.

Before the Corinthian believers followed Jesus, someone influenced these Corinthians and led them to do wrong things. These Corinthians worshiped mute pagan idols, or gods who have nothing good or spiritual to say. Paul wants the believers to understand that the Spirit of God will never cause a person to say, "Jesus is cursed." In the same way, a person cannot say, "Jesus is my Lord and Master," unless the Holy Spirit is guiding that person. During this time, Christians regularly said "Jesus is Lord" as a common confession of their faith, and a way to identify each other as followers of Jesus.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What are some common phrases used in your community that identify a person as a member of a particular group? Pause this audio here.

Paul was telling the Corinthian believers that everyone who confesses Jesus is Lord is just like every other follower of Jesus. All of these people are equal. Christians have different kinds of spiritual gifts or abilities, but the same Holy Spirit gave these different gifts to each person. Christians have many different ways of serving, but all Christians serve the same Lord Jesus. Christians work in different ways, or do different things, but the same God makes it possible for everyone to do all of these different things. God gives gifts from the Holy Spirit to every Christian to benefit everyone in the Christian community.

Next, Paul lists some of the possible gifts of the Holy Spirit that God gives to different Christians. The Holy Spirit gives one gift to one person and gives a different gift to another person. Though each gift is different, the Holy Spirit is the same. The Holy Spirit gives each gift. The Holy Spirit decides which gift to give to each person.

Paul does not explain each gift or how a Christian uses the gift. Paul just provides a list of different ways that God shows that the Holy Spirit works in a believer's life through gifts the Holy Spirit gives the believers. Paul does not name all of the possible gifts. The gifts that Paul mentions here are:

- The Holy Spirit gives some people messages full of God's wisdom.
- The Holy Spirit gives some people messages of knowledge or messages that have good information and teaching.
- The Holy Spirit gives some people strong faith or trust in God to do amazing things.
- The Holy Spirit gives some people the ability to heal sick people.
- The Holy Spirit gives some people the ability to do powerful miracles or to ask God to do supernatural things that only God can do.
- The Holy Spirit gives some people the ability to prophesy or speak messages from God.
- The Holy Spirit gives some people the ability to know which messages and gifts come from an evil spirit and which things come from the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit gives some people the ability to speak in languages those people have not learned.
- The Holy Spirit gives some people the ability to translate what those people say in those other languages.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Since this is only a partial list of spiritual gifts, how were you surprised by the gifts that Paul included in this list? What gifts did you think Paul should have added to the list? Think about Christians who you know. What gifts from the Holy Spirit do you see working in those Christians?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul begins to answer the Corinthians' question about special abilities that the Holy Spirit gives. Paul wants the Corinthians to understand things clearly. Only the Holy Spirit can cause a person to say, "Jesus is Lord."

In the second part: Paul explains that Christians have different gifts and ways of serving God, but God, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are the same.

In the third part: Each Christian receives a gift from God to benefit the entire community. Each person receives a different gift that shows that the same Holy Spirit is working in each Christian. Paul lists some of the ways that the Holy Spirit works in Christians.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Corinthian believers
- God
- Lord Jesus
- And the Holy Spirit

Paul begins this passage by telling the Corinthians that Paul is switching to another topic. Paul now wants to talk about another question the Corinthians asked Paul about in a letter. Paul wants Paul's Christian brothers and sisters to understand more things about spiritual gifts or spiritual things.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Paul is answering a new question from the Corinthian believers. How do you make transitions to a new topic in your language? How will you make this transition to this new topic in your translation? Pause this audio here.

Many translations say that Paul wants to talk to the Corinthians about spiritual gifts. However, in the original language, Paul uses a word that refers to spiritual things. This word is different from the word Paul used for gifts in earlier passages. Paul also does not use this word when Paul speaks about the various spiritual gifts in this passage. Other ways that people can translate this idea are, "I want to speak to you about spiritual things," or, "I want to speak to you about spiritual people," or, "I want to speak to you about spiritual practices." Many translations have chosen to keep the phrase "spiritual gifts" because Paul names ways that the Holy Spirit works in people's lives, and these are the spiritual gifts in this passage.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate this idea of spiritual things into your language. Pause this audio here.

In this first part, Paul tells the Corinthian believers more information about spiritual things. Paul reminds the Corinthians that when the Corinthians were pagans, or people who worshiped false gods, someone led these Corinthians astray. In other words, someone led these Corinthians to follow idols.

Stop here and do this activity: Have a group of people walk along a straight path. Have one person stand to the side of this group. As the group of people walk along the path, have the person on the side lead the people to come off the path and start walking a different way. How will you talk about leading people in a certain direction? Pause this audio here.

When the believers were pagans, someone led these people to worship idols that are mute, or do not speak. We know from a previous part of this letter that demons are also present when people worship idols, so Paul probably does not mean that these false gods do not speak. Paul probably means that idols, or false gods, cannot

speak about anything important, or about spiritual things from God. Paul wants the believers to know that the Spirit of God will never cause a person to say, "Jesus is cursed," which means that they would wish harm to come to Jesus. In the same way, if a person says, "Jesus is Lord and Master," the Holy Spirit is guiding or speaking through that person.

In the second part, Paul explains that there are a variety, or different kinds, of gifts, but the same Holy Spirit gives these gifts to us. This time, Paul uses a word in the original language for gifts that means "grace-gifts" or "gifts of grace." The Holy Spirit gives us these good and special abilities that we do not deserve. This is the word that Paul will use for gifts in the rest of this passage.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate this idea of grace-gifts in your translation? How is this idea different from the word about spiritual things that you discussed at the beginning of the passage? Pause this audio here.

Paul continues to explain that each Christian serves God in different ways, but all Christians serve the same Lord Jesus. People serve others when they do kind things for people and help people who need something.

Stop here and discuss the following as a group: Talk about a time when people served, or helped, other people. Maybe these people did this by giving other people food, building a house for them, or helping the people in their fields. How do you talk about serving other people in this way? How can you talk about the fact that there are different kinds of service, or ways to serve people? Pause this audio here.

Paul then says that there are a variety of activities, or work, but one God is acting in all of them. People have two different ideas about what Paul is saying about different work. Some believe that Paul is saying that God gives different work to different people. Others believe that Paul is saying that God is working in people's lives in different ways to help them grow spiritually. Either way is true, so try to translate this idea in a way that allows for either meaning.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate in your translation that there are different ways to work? Pause this audio here.

In the next part, Paul lists some of the spiritual gifts. Paul tells them that God manifests, reveals, or gives proof of the Spirit's presence in each believer. God does this so we can all help each other and use our gifts for the good of all people.

Paul now lists some of the different spiritual gifts. Paul uses similar wording each time Paul mentions a gift. Paul lists nine different gifts in this passage. Paul starts by saying that the Holy Spirit gives one person the message of wisdom. Paul is not saying that only one person gets this gift. Paul is saying that this is an example of one gift that the Spirit gives to some people. Then Paul says, "To another," and then Paul names another gift the Spirit gives to some believers. Paul continues talking like this until Paul has listed nine gifts.

Stop here and do this activity as a group: Collect a variety of different objects. You should collect the same number of different objects as there are people in your group. For example, if six people are in your group, collect six different objects. Place all of the objects together. Now, have one group member give an object to each person in your group. Pause this audio here.

Now, describe the actions of the person who gives the objects to the group members. Pay attention to the words you use to describe how the person gave the various objects to each group member. Pause this audio here.

Paul does not give very much explanation of each gift and how that gift works. Paul only tells us what the gift is called. The Holy Spirit gives one person the ability to give a message of wisdom. In other words, the Holy Spirit gives that person the ability to speak wisely. The Spirit gives another person a message of knowledge that helps people know about God's truth. The Spirit gives yet another person faith that helps the person trust God very much. The same Holy Spirit gives other people the ability to heal sick people. At this point, Paul keeps naming spiritual gifts but does not mention that these gifts come from the Holy Spirit. Paul assumes that the Corinthians now understand that all of these gifts also come from the Spirit of God.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do people in your culture give these kinds of lists? Do you have to keep saying where the gifts come from, or will people realize that all of the gifts come from the Holy Spirit? Decide as a translation team how you will give your list. You can add "from the same Spirit" to the other gifts if people who speak your language need it to understand what Paul is saying. Pause this audio here.

Some Christians have the ability to do miracles or powerful deeds. Other people can prophesy or declare God's messages to people. Other people have the ability to tell which things come from an evil spirit and which come from the Holy Spirit. Other Christians are able to speak languages that they have not learned. It is unclear whether these are foreign languages or a special language from heaven. Other people are able to explain the meaning of those languages. It is only God's Spirit who gives each person the power to do these things. God's Spirit decides which gifts to give to each Christian.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Corinthian Christians
- God
- Lord Jesus
- And the Holy Spirit

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul tells the Corinthians, "Now, brothers and sisters, I want to answer your question about spiritual things. I do not want you to be misinformed about these things. You know that when you followed your old religion, people influenced you and led you to worship speechless idols. I want you to know that people who speak by God's Holy Spirit will say that Jesus is Lord and can never curse Jesus."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Corinthian Christians, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I used to say all kinds of bad things about Jesus before I became a Christian. I could never say those things now;" or
- "I am happy that Paul is answering our questions. Someone so easily led me to worship that lifeless false god;" or
- "I am glad I follow Jesus and that God's Holy Spirit lives in me."

Paul continues, "There are different kinds of spiritual grace-gifts, but the one Spirit of God gives them to us. There are different ways to serve, but we all serve the same Lord Jesus. God works in and through us in different ways, but it is the same God who is doing the work."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want the Corinthians to know that we are all serving the same God but in many different ways;" or
- "It is exciting to see all the different gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to the church;" or
- "I am amazed at all the beautiful and creative ways God works in people's lives. God is truly great and powerful."

The Holy Spirit of God gives each of us a spiritual gift so that we can help each other. The Holy Spirit gives one person the message of wisdom, and the same Spirit gives another person the message of knowledge. The same Holy Spirit gives another person the ability to have great faith in God. To another person, the Holy Spirit gives the ability to heal people from sickness. Yet another person has the ability to do powerful miracles, and another is able to speak messages from God. The Holy Spirit helps other people know which things are evil and which things come from God. Also, some people can speak languages they have not learned, and others can interpret those languages."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Holy Spirit, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I love giving gifts to God's people;" or
- "I am pleased that the believers have these gifts so that they can use them to help one another;" or
- "I want to make sure that the local church does not lack anything it needs. The believers will proclaim the good news of Jesus when they use these spiritual gifts."

The one and only Holy Spirit gives these abilities to believers in Jesus. God's Holy Spirit decides which gift to give to each Christian.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul begins this passage with, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, **brothers**." Paul is speaking to both men and women. Some translators have chosen to translate this as "brothers and sisters." Use the same word for brothers, or brothers and sisters, that you have used in previous passages.

Many translations say that Paul wants to talk to the believers about spiritual gifts. However, in the original language, Paul uses a word that refers to **spiritual things**. This word is different from the word Paul used for gifts in earlier passages. Paul also does not use this word when Paul speaks about the various spiritual gifts in this passage. Other ways that people can translate this idea are, "I want to speak to you about spiritual things,"

or, "I want to speak to you about spiritual people," or, "I want to speak to you about spiritual practices." Many translations have chosen to keep the phrase "spiritual gifts" because Paul talks mostly about spiritual gifts in this passage.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate this idea of spiritual things into your language. Pause this audio here.

Paul told the Corinthians that when the Corinthians were **pagans**, or people who worshiped false gods, the Corinthians were led astray to follow mute or speechless **idols**. Idols are images or statues of false gods. Use the same word for pagan and idol that you have used in previous passages. For more information, refer to pagan god and idol in the Master Glossary.

Paul said that the Spirit of God, or **Holy Spirit**, does not cause people to **curse** Jesus. People who say "Jesus is **Lord**, or Master" are guided by the Holy Spirit. Use the same words for Holy Spirit, curse, and Lord that you have used in previous passages. For more information about the Holy Spirit, Lord, and curse, refer to the Master Glossary.

Paul tells the Corinthians that the Holy Spirit gives different kinds of **gifts**. This time, Paul uses a word in the original language for gifts that means "grace-gifts" or "gifts of grace." The Holy Spirit gives believers these good and special abilities or skills that they do not deserve. Believers use these abilities to serve God and one another.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **gifts**. Look up gift in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The Holy Spirit gives one believer messages of **wisdom** or the ability to speak wisely. The Holy Spirit gives another believer messages of **knowledge**. The Holy Spirit gives another believer the ability to have great **faith** or believe God for great things. Use the same words for wisdom, knowledge, and faith that you have used in previous passages. For more information about wisdom and faith, refer to the Master Glossary.

The Holy Spirit gives some believers the ability to **heal** sick people from diseases. This type of healing was of the physical body only.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **physical healing**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The Holy Spirit gives some other believers the ability to do **miracles** or powerful deeds. A miracle is something that happens that is unusual, surprising, and seems impossible.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **miracles**. Look up miracles in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The Holy Spirit gives some believers the ability to **prophesy** or declare God's word to people. A **prophecy** can be an instruction from God about something that needs to be done. It can be a message that tells about something that will happen in the future. Through the Holy Spirit, God can give these believers some special knowledge or insight that is for the good of the church. Use the same word for prophecy that you have used in previous passages. For more information about prophecy, refer to the Master Glossary.

The Holy Spirit gives some people the ability to **distinguish** or **discern** between spirits. These people can tell which things come from an evil spirit and which come from the Holy Spirit.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate **discerning** or **judging** between spirits. Most likely you can use the same word for spirit that you have used in other passages. However, if needed, refer to spirit-supernatural being in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

The Holy Spirit gives some Christians the ability to speak languages, or **tongues**, that they have not learned. It is unclear whether these are foreign languages or a special language from heaven.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "speaking in tongues." Look up tongues in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

1 Corinthians 12:1–11

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 12:12–26

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 12:12–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the previous passage, Paul explained to the Corinthians that the Holy Spirit gave different kinds of spiritual gifts. The Spirit gives these gifts to believers so that the believers can use them to benefit everyone. The Holy Spirit gives one gift to some people and a different gift to other people. God's Holy Spirit decides which gift to give to each Christian.

In this passage, Paul uses the example of the human body to help the Corinthians better understand how this works. Paul compares the church, or the Body of Christ, to the physical human body. Paul used the image of the body in earlier parts of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. You will remember Paul's earlier discussions on sexual immorality and the Lord's Supper, where Paul referred to believers as part of the Body of Christ. Here, Paul explains this idea more completely.

The people in Corinth were probably familiar with the special language of a body representing a group of people. Famous Greek and Roman teachers and leaders had spoken about the human body as an example of unity and connection. A Roman emperor once told a story similar to the one Paul told. The emperor was trying to unite the people and leaders who were fighting with each other.

Stop here and tell a well-known story from your culture that teaches people to be unified, or to cooperate with each other. Pause this audio here.

Paul said that all believers in Jesus, regardless of those believers' ethnic group or their position in society, became Christians in the same way. God baptized or immersed each believer in the one Spirit of God. That means that the believers all received God's Spirit. God made the believers drink from the same Spirit of God. That means that all believers experienced the same Spirit of God. When God did this, the believers became members or parts of the body of Christ. This was different from being a member of a club or social group.

When Paul refers to "members" or "parts" of a body, Paul is speaking about the limbs, internal organs, and other parts that make up a whole physical body. Near the city of Corinth, some people had built a pagan temple dedicated to the god of healing. People would come from the region to seek healing for various diseases. If a person was healed, that person would have a craftsman make a pottery statue of that person's healed body part. The healed person would leave the statue at the temple as an offering to that god. These images represented just one part of a body, but not a whole body. Everyone who lived in Corinth would have known about these individual-body-part statues. Maybe the Corinthians thought about these images when Paul talked about the parts of the body.

Paul uses a humorous story to share Paul's ideas. The characters in Paul's story are parts of the human body. The different body parts talk to one another and to themselves. This probably amused the people. The believers would understand that the body parts were saying things that were silly and unreasonable.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Many cultures tell folk stories or parables in which nonhuman characters speak. If your culture tells stories like this, have a member of your group tell a story where a nonhuman character speaks. Pause this audio here.

Paul's main point of the story is that just as God created the human body, God also created the body of Christ. God placed each part in the human body so that the body would function correctly. God also placed each person in the body of Christ. God has given each person an important function within the body of Christ. Together the believers are one body, and each part, or person, is important. If every part of the body was an eye or an ear, then the body would look very strange. That strange body would not have some very important body functions.

Paul gives examples to emphasize that even the parts that do not seem important are actually very important. In the first example, Paul explains that the parts of the body we think are weak are very important. Then, Paul explains that people cover up parts of the body that seem less honorable or unpresentable. Paul most likely refers to the private sexual organs and the breasts. These body parts are important so that people can produce children and then feed the children. They also provide other important body functions. People treat these parts carefully and with modesty by covering them with clothing to make them look more acceptable and honorable.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what parts of the body must people cover with clothing? What happens if someone does not cover this body part? What do other people in the community say or think about that person if they do not cover this body part? Pause this audio here.

Paul reminds the Corinthians that when one part of their body has pain and suffers, the whole body also hurts. When one part of the body receives some kind of honor, the whole body is happy and celebrates.

Stop here and discuss this as a group: What parts of the body do you rarely think about except when they cause you pain or joy? Tell of a time when you hurt a small body part or a hidden body part. For example, when a tooth, a small toe, or a finger hurt you, how did you feel? How did the rest of your body respond? Pause this audio here.

Paul used this funny story to show that having different parts is important for the body to function. But, even though the body has different parts, it is still one body. God created the body this way. In the next part of Paul's letter, Paul will explain how this works in the body of Christ—the church.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 12:12–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul gives Paul's big idea. Paul compares the church, or the Body of Christ, to the human body. There are many kinds of people—Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free people—but the Holy Spirit brings all these people together as one.

In the second part: Paul emphasizes that the human body has many parts. God designed the human body and how each part of the body should work so that the body is healthy. God made many parts to create one body.

In the third part: Paul tells the believers that the different parts of the body need each other. For example, people treat weaker parts of their bodies with special care because they need them! They cover the body parts that are less honorable or private. If one part of the body is suffering, the whole body feels the suffering. If one part is honored, the whole body is joyful.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Corinthian believers
- God
- Christ
- Holy Spirit
- And parts of the body such as:
 - Foot
 - Hand
 - Ear
 - Eye
 - Head
 - Weak body part
 - Body parts we do not value
 - And body parts we do not want to see

In the previous part of Paul's letter, Paul explains how the Holy Spirit of God gives different gifts to different people. God does this to benefit the whole community. Even though the Holy Spirit gives believers different gifts, Christians serve one God.

Now Paul continues Paul's theme of unity in this passage. In the first part of this passage, Paul gives us this big idea by using special, creative language to make comparisons. Paul makes two comparisons right away. Paul says that the church is like the body of Christ. Paul also says that believers are like different parts of this body of Christ.

In this first part, Paul says the word "one" six different times as a way to emphasize the importance of unity. Paul starts and ends the first part with parallel, or companion, statements, saying the same thing in two ways. First, Paul says that the body is one with many members, or parts. Later, Paul says the same idea a bit differently. Paul says, "The body does not have one member, but many members, or parts." Paul says this to show Paul's main idea that each person is like a part of a human body. The parts all together make up one body.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do you say or do in your language so that people will know what your main point is? Pause this audio here.

When Paul refers to "members" or "parts" of a body, Paul is speaking about the limbs, internal organs, and other parts that make up a whole physical body.

Paul then makes a comparison with Christ when Paul says, "So it is with Christ." In the original language, Paul does not say "body of Christ," even though this is what Paul is suggesting. Because Paul was talking about a physical body, the Corinthians would have known that Paul was now speaking about the body of Christ, which is the church.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate "So it is with Christ" in your language. Some possible options for translating this are:

- "So it is with Christ;" or
- "So it is with the body of Christ;" or
- "So it is with the church, which is like the body of Christ." Pause this audio here.

Again, Paul uses parallel or companion statements to make the same point. The Corinthians became members of the body of Christ in the same way—that is, through the Spirit of God. The Corinthian believers now all have the same Spirit of God. The believers are now united in one body of Christ, the church. Paul uses two images to help describe this idea.

The first image is baptism by, or in, the one and only Holy Spirit. The exact meaning of the image is unclear. Some think that Paul is saying that God immerses or baptizes the believers in the Holy Spirit, who then makes them all part of the same body, or church. Others think that Paul is saying that the Holy Spirit is the one immersing the believers into the body of Christ. In either case, the result is the same: all the believers have the same Holy Spirit, which makes them one united body of Christ, the church.

Stop here and discuss this as a group: Because we are not sure exactly what Paul means when Paul says that believers were all baptized in, or by, the Holy Spirit, it is best to say this in a general way. In any case, all the believers have the same Holy Spirit and are a part of the same body of Christ, the church. How will you describe this part of the passage? Pause this audio here.

The second image is that God made the believers drink, or experience, the one and only Holy Spirit. Paul is saying that God gave all believers God's Holy Spirit, which gives them life in the same way that people drink water to stay alive.

Stop here and discuss the following as a group: Tell a story about a time when you wanted to experience something as fully as possible. How do you talk about that? How will you talk about the believers drinking, or experiencing, the Holy Spirit fully in their lives? Pause this audio here.

As Paul gives us these images, Paul also makes it clear that every believer, no matter who they are, is part of the same body of Christ and has the same Spirit of God. Believers might be Jewish people, who are the descendants of Jacob and who were for so long God's special people. Believers might be Greeks or Gentiles, who are people who did not come from God's special people but now have become part of God's people because they believe in Jesus. Believers might also be slaves, or people who others think have no rights at all.

Paul finishes part one by saying again that the human body has many parts that make up the one body. Now Paul will give examples of how the many parts are different, but work together.

In part two, Paul uses a special technique that was common for presenting special arguments. Paul speaks about the parts of the body as if those parts could talk and think. The different body parts talk to one another and to themselves. The Corinthians knew that body parts cannot talk. Paul had different parts of the body talk so they could say silly and unreasonable things. Imagine a foot saying, "I am not a hand, so I am not part of the body." Even though the foot says this, the foot is still part of the body. One way of translating this idea without the foot speaking is, "If the foot should say that it is not part of the body because it is not a hand, even though it says that, it is still part of the body." Next, the ear says the same thing about not being an eye.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate the parts when the body parts are speaking. If your language has a similar storytelling style that allows nonhuman objects to speak, you may decide to translate this in a similar way. If your language does not allow nonhuman objects to speak, how will you explain this part so that people understand? Pause this audio here.

Paul asks three similar questions with an obvious answer. Paul asks, "If the whole body was an eye, how could the body hear?" And, "If the whole body was an ear, how could the body smell?" Paul is expecting the Corinthians' answer to be, "Of course the body could not hear!" or "Of course the body could not smell!" Then Paul asks, "If the body had just one part, how would it be a true body?" Paul is emphasizing through these questions that God made one body with many parts and put each part where God wants them.

In part three, Paul shows that the body parts cannot act by themselves. The parts need each other. Paul continues with examples from the imaginary body parts that can speak. Paul says the eye cannot tell the hand, "I do not need you." The head cannot say to the feet, "I do not need you." One way to translate this without the

body part speaking is, "That is why the eyes cannot say they do not need hands. That is also why the head cannot say it does not need the feet." Paul is emphasizing that the parts of the body cannot live alone. The parts need each other to have a complete body.

Stop here and discuss how your team will translate the conversation of the body parts in this part. You should do this in a similar way to how you translated the speech in part two. Pause this audio here.

Paul uses a phrase to show that what Paul is about to say is the true situation, which is the opposite of the imagined conversation of the body parts. Paul is telling the believers that Paul is about to give the believers the actual truth.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use in your language to let your listener know that Paul is now giving the truth to correct the believers' wrong thinking. Pause this audio here.

Paul speaks about three categories of body parts, but Paul does not explain what each of these categories are. Paul explains that the body parts that we think are weak, or not strong, are necessary. We cannot live without these parts. Paul may have been thinking about the organs inside our bodies, like the stomach, heart, or liver. Next, Paul says that the body parts that we do not value, we treat them with honor. Paul may have been thinking about parts of the body that we often cover with clothing. Finally, Paul says that the body parts that we think nobody should see, we also cover them modestly with clothing. Paul probably refers to our private parts or sexual organs.

The parts that we think people can look at—the honorable or strong parts—do not get special treatment.

Paul closes this part by reminding the believers that when one part of their body has pain and suffers, the whole body also hurts. When one part of the body receives some kind of honor, the whole body is happy and celebrates.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 12:12–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Corinthian believers
- God
- Christ
- Holy Spirit
- And parts of the body such as:
- Foot
- Hand
- Ear
- Eye
- Head
- Weak body part
- Body parts we do not value
- And body parts we do not want to see

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers, "The human body has many parts, such as limbs and organs, yet it is still one body. The body of Christ is the same way. Some of us are Jews, some are Greeks, some are slaves, and some are free. God has baptized us by the one and only Holy Spirit into one body. God has made us drink from the same Holy Spirit."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I love every type of person. I made each person unique, but I want them to be united as one;" or
- "I give each person eternal life by making each person experience my Holy Spirit;" or
- "I am happy that the people I created are now part of the body of Christ. We are now in a right relationship again."

Paul continues, "The body does not have just one part, but it has many parts. Imagine a foot saying, 'I am not a hand, so I am not part of the body.' Even though the foot says this, the foot is still part of the body. Or imagine the ear saying, 'I am not an eye, so I am not part of the body.' Even though the eye said this, the eye is still part of the body."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the foot and the ear, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I sometimes do not feel very important or useful;" or
- "That is true. I am part of the body just like the part I admire;" or
- "I am happy to know that I am useful."

If the whole body were an eye, the body would not be able to hear. If the whole body were an ear, the body would not be able to smell. The truth is that God has placed each part of the body exactly where God wants each part to be. If the whole body were one part, like one hand or one eye, it would not be a body. There are many parts, but they form one body."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "Paul sure is using some funny examples. Of course, you cannot have a body that is only a hand or an eye. That would be strange;" or
- "Wow, God has a special plan for every part of the body."

An eye cannot say to a hand, "I do not need you!" The head cannot tell the feet, "I do not need you!" Actually, some parts of the body that seem weak or less important are, in fact, the most necessary. The parts of the body we do not think highly of, we cover them with clothes. And the private body parts, we modestly hide those parts with clothing so no one can see them. However, we do not have to be modest and hide the parts of the body that we can show. God has put together the body parts so that the parts of the body that we think are not important, God has made them important. God has done this so that the body will be in harmony and not divided. Each part of the body cares for the other parts. When one part is hurt, the other parts of the body suffer with it. When one part of the body receives some kind of honor, the whole body is happy and celebrates.

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the eye and the head, "What are you feeling or thinking?" A person might answer things like:

- "That is true. I need the hand. I need someone to wipe my tears when I cry. I need someone to hold the beautiful flower more closely so I can see it better;" or
- "I would never be able to go where I need to if the feet did not take me."

Ask the person playing the less honorable body part, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am glad I have these nice clothes covering me. I would be ashamed if everyone could see me;" or
- "I thought I was hidden because I am not important. I am happy to know that God is honoring me by keeping me private."

Ask the person playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "Paul is right. I hurt my little toe on a rock the other day, and it hurt my whole body. I did not feel like doing anything," or
- "I remember when someone said that my eyes were pretty. I was happy for the rest of the day," or
- "It is amazing how God created our bodies to work. He is truly a powerful God."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 12:12–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul says that the human body has many members, or parts. Paul is speaking about the limbs and internal organs that make up a whole physical body, such as a hand, a foot, an eye, an ear, a heart, or a stomach. **Members**, or **body parts**, is a general term for all of the items that make up a physical body. Use the same word for a human or physical body that you have been using in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **members**, or **body parts**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says it is the same way with the body of **Christ**. Use the same word for Christ that you have used in previous passages. Refer to Christ in the Master Glossary for more information.

Paul said that God **baptized**, or immersed, all believers in the **Spirit**, meaning God's Spirit. God made them drink from the same Spirit. Sometimes we call God's Spirit the Holy Spirit or just the Spirit. Use the same words for baptize and Spirit, God's Spirit, or Holy Spirit, that you have used in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information on baptism and the Holy Spirit.

God baptized all believers—**Jews**, **Greeks** or **Gentiles**, and **slaves** or free people—into one body or church. In this passage Paul uses the word for Greeks, which sometimes means people from the country of Greece. However, remember that Greeks in this context also just means anyone who is not a Jew. We call these people Gentiles. You may use Greeks if your audience understands that this is anyone who is not a Jew, or you may use the more general term for Gentile, which means anyone who is not a Jew. Use the same words for Jews, Greeks or Gentiles, and slaves that you have used in previous passages. For more information, refer to the Master Glossary for Jew, Gentile, Greeks, and slave.

1 Corinthians 12:12–26

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (17412868 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (23279493 KB)

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1 Corinthians 12:27–31

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 12:27–31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the previous part of Paul's letter, Paul compares the body of Christ to a physical human body. Paul tells how there are different members, or parts, of the body, but it is still one body. Each part is important and has an important role to play. God designed the body to be like this.

In this part of Paul's letter, Paul combines Paul's teaching about spiritual gifts and the body and discusses how these apply to the body of Christ, the church. You will remember from an earlier passage that Paul said that God gives different gifts to different people to help the entire community. Just as God placed the individual parts in the physical body, God has also placed each believer as part of the body of Christ. Paul then lists some of the parts that God has appointed, or chosen, to be in the body of Christ.

Stop here and discuss what Paul already told the Corinthians about spiritual gifts. Try to name all the spiritual gifts that Paul mentioned in the earlier passage. Pause this audio here.

This list is slightly different from the list that Paul gave in a previous passage. Paul repeats five gifts from that list and adds four different gifts. Paul again mentions the gifts of prophecy, miracles, healing, speaking in tongues, and interpretation of tongues. To this list, Paul adds the gifts of being an apostle, being a teacher, helping, and administrating or leading.

In this list, Paul gives some names of positions or roles in the church: apostles or sent ones, prophets, and teachers. Paul says these roles are first, second, and third. Some believe that Paul gave these in order of their importance. It is also possible that Paul was simply saying that these were the gifts that people needed to begin a church. An apostle is someone who Jesus sends out with the authority to represent Jesus and share the good news of Jesus. A prophet is someone who proclaims God's message. A teacher is someone who explains God's message. People with these gifts are often the ones who start a new local church.

Paul then lists some of the other gifts that believers need in the body of Christ. Paul does not give these in any order of importance. Paul adds the gift of helping and the gift of leadership or administration. Paul did not talk about these gifts in the earlier passage. A person with the gift of helping is a believer whom God gives the special ability and desire to help other people in practical ways. A person with the gift of administrating or leading is someone whom God has given the ability to organize and manage the work of the church. All of these gifts work together in the local church, the body of Christ.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about Christians who you know. When have you seen people use the gift of helping or leading? Since this is just a list of some of the gifts, what other gifts that are not on these lists do you see working in the body of Christ? Pause this audio here.

Paul then asks the same question seven times about these different gifts. With all of these questions, Paul is saying, "We do not all have the same spiritual gift, do we?" Paul does not expect anyone to answer the questions, because the answer is the same for each question: "No, of course not!"

Paul then says something that seems confusing. Paul tells the believers to "desire the greater gifts," but Paul has been telling the believers that all of the gifts are important. Some believe that Paul is saying that some gifts are better than others, but this goes against what Paul has been saying. Paul is most likely saying that the greater gift is for each believer to recognize that God has given gifts to every believer. Each believer should

honor other believers and how God has gifted those believers. The believers must eagerly desire to use their gifts for the benefit of the body of Christ.

The Corinthians had been wanting what the Corinthians considered to be the most important gifts. Paul told the Corinthians that there is something even more excellent or important that the Corinthians must pursue. Paul will tell the believers about this thing in the next part of Paul's letter.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 12:27–31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has one part.

In the first part: Paul explains how God places people with different roles and spiritual gifts within the body of Christ, the church.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God
- And Corinthian believers, including:
 - Apostles
 - Prophets
 - Teachers
 - People with the gift of miracles
 - People with the gift of healing
 - People with the gift of helping
 - People with the gift of leading
 - People with the gift of tongues
 - And people with the gift of interpretation of tongues

In the previous passage, Paul explained how God created the body with different parts. God gave each part a necessary role in the body.

In this passage, Paul explains how the church is like this image of the body. Paul begins the passage with a word that tells people that Paul is changing the topic. Paul is no longer talking about the physical body. Paul is now talking about the body of Christ.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase in your language your team will use to show that Paul is changing the topic. Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the Corinthians that each believer is a part of the body. Together the believers are the body of Christ. Paul then lists some of the parts that God has appointed, or chosen, to be in the body of Christ. God has selected each part to do a task in the body of Christ, the church.

Paul starts the list by saying, "first apostles, second prophets, third teachers." Paul continues the list without giving a number order. We do not know why Paul chose to give the list in this way. Some believe that Paul listed these gifts in order of the gifts' importance. It is also possible that Paul was saying that these first three gifts were the gifts needed for believers to begin a church. Others believe that Paul was simply giving the list with

no order of priority. Because Paul was unclear about if the numbers were in order of importance or just the order of the list, we recommend that you follow the same pattern as Paul does in your language, if possible.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate the numbers of this list in your language. Pause this audio here.

Paul names the first three gifts on the list by the name of their position, or role, in the church. An apostle is someone who Jesus sends out with the authority to represent Jesus and share the good news of Jesus. A prophet is someone who proclaims God's message. A teacher is someone who explains God's message. Paul names the remaining people in the list according to the special abilities, or spiritual gifts, God has given each person. If this type of list is unusual in your language, it is possible to translate it so that you refer to people rather than gifts and abilities. Some examples of how you can translate miracles are, "people who perform miracles," "workers of miracles," or "people to whom God gave the work of doing miracles." Some other ways that you can translate "gifts of healing" are "healers," "those people who have the ability to heal sick people," or "people to whom God gave the work of healing others."

Stop here and discuss how you will translate this list of abilities that God has placed in the church in a way that sounds natural in your language. You can choose to follow the list as Paul gave the list, or you can make a list of people rather than a mixture of people and abilities. Pause this audio here.

Paul adds the gift of helping and the gift of leadership or administration. Paul did not talk about these gifts in the earlier part of Paul's letter. A person with the gift of helping is a believer to whom God gives the special ability and desire to help other people in practical ways. Some examples of how you can translate "gift of helping" are "helpers," "those people who have the ability to help others," or "people to whom God gave the work of helping others." A person with the gift of administrating or leading is someone whom God has given the ability to organize and manage the work of the church. Some ways that you can translate "gifts of administrating" are "leaders," "administrators," "those people with the ability to organize," or "people to whom God gave the work of administration." Some ways that you can translate "gift of tongues" are "those people who can speak in unknown languages" or "people who can speak in languages given to them by the Holy Spirit."

Stop here and discuss how you will translate this list of abilities in your language. Make sure that you translate the list using the same method you decided for the other gifts. Pause this audio here.

Paul then asks the same question seven times about these different gifts. Paul does not expect anyone to answer the questions, because the answer is obvious. The answer is, "No, of course not!" With all these questions, Paul is saying, "We do not all have the same spiritual gift, do we?" If your language does not use these kinds of questions, you may want to translate these questions as statements. For example, instead of asking, "Are all apostles?" You can say, "Not everyone is an apostle."

Stop here and discuss how you will translate the seven questions Paul asks. Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the Corinthians to "eagerly desire the greater gifts." It is unclear if Paul is giving a command to seek spiritual gifts, or if Paul is making a statement about the Corinthians seeking certain gifts over other gifts. Some people believe that Paul is saying that some gifts are better than others, but this goes against what Paul has been saying. Some people have suggested that the greater gift is the one that is most useful or helpful to the local church. Since Paul has been saying that all spiritual gifts have value, Paul is most likely saying that the gift is greater because it is useful to the church. One gift is not more important than another gift. A gift is greater when a person uses the gift to help the body of Christ function properly.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate "greater gifts." Some other possible ways to translate this are "most useful," "most helpful," "highest," or "important." Pause this audio here.

The Corinthians had been wanting what they considered to be the most important gifts. Paul told the Corinthians that the Corinthians must pursue something even more excellent or important. Paul talks about following a more excellent, or better, path. Paul is not talking about a better spiritual gift but about a better way of behaving. When people behave in this way, each person's spiritual gift is more useful to the church.

Stop here and discuss the following as a group: Paul compares acting a certain way to walking along a path. How will you talk about Paul showing the Corinthians a better way to behave? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 12:27–31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has one part.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God
- And the Corinthian believers, including:
- Apostles
- Prophets
- Teachers
- People with the gift of miracles
- People with the gift of healing
- People with the gift of helping
- People with the gift of leading
- People with the gift of tongues
- And people with the gift of interpretation of tongues

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers, "Together, you are Christ's body, the church. Each one of you is part of Christ's body. God has chosen different parts for the church. I will tell you what some of these parts are: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "Oh, I am starting to see why Paul told us that story about the human body;" or
- "I am happy that God has chosen me to be part of the body of Christ;" or
- "I see apostles, prophets, and teachers in our church! I see how useful they are!" or
- "These are three necessary parts of the church. These parts help us know God's message and help us start churches in other places."

Paul continues the list when Paul says, "There are people that God gives the ability to do miracles and those to whom God gives the gift of healing the sick. God gives some people the ability to help others. To other people, God gives the gift of organizing. And God gives some people the ability to speak languages those people have not learned."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I love giving special gifts to my children;" or
- "I want the church to have everything it needs to function correctly."

Then Paul says, "Not everyone is an apostle. Not everyone is a prophet or teacher. Not all of us can do miracles. Not everyone can heal sick people. We do not all speak in unknown languages, and not all of us can interpret those languages. We do not all have the same spiritual gift, do we? Of course not! You desire spiritual gifts, so desire the gifts that are most useful to the church."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "Now I understand! We are supposed to be different and not the same. God planned it this way;" or
- "Wow, if everyone had the same gift, then there would be a lot of things that would not get done. We really do need each other;" or
- "I want to be useful to my brothers and sisters in the church."

Paul tells the believers, "Now let me tell you about the greatest path of all."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I hope they now understand that everyone is useful to the body of Christ;" or
- "I have something else even more important to show the believers. Without this quality, they will not use their spiritual gifts properly."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 12:27–31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul told the Corinthians that each believer is part of the **body of Christ**. Use the same word for Christ and body of Christ that you have used in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about Christ.

God has appointed, or chosen, the different parts to be in the **church**. Use the same word for church that you have used in previous passages. For more information on church, refer to the Master Glossary.

First, God appointed **apostles**, or people who Christ sent out. Second, God appointed **prophets**, or those who speak messages for God. And third, God appointed **teachers**. Use the same word for apostles and prophets that you have used in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about apostle and prophet. A teacher in this context is a religious teacher who explains the Word of God to people.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **teacher**. Look up teacher in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

God assigned some people the **spiritual gift** of doing **miracles** and the **gift of healing**. Use the same word or phrase for miracles and the gift of healing that you have used in previous passages. For more information about spiritual gift and miracles, see the Master Glossary.

God assigned some people the **gift of helping** others. A person with the gift of helping is a believer whom God gives the special ability and desire to help other people in practical ways.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for the **gift of helping**. If you have already translated this word or phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

God appointed the **gift of administration** or **leadership**. A person with the gift of administrating or leading is someone whom God has given the ability to organize and manage the work of the church.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for the **gift of administration** or **leadership**. If you have already translated this word or phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

God appointed some believers to have the gift of **tongues** and others to have the gift of the **interpretation of tongues**. Use the same word or phrase for tongues and interpretation of tongues that you have used in previous passages. For more information, refer to tongues in the Master Glossary.

1 Corinthians 12:27-31

Audio Content

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
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[mp3 zip](#) (18706003 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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1 Corinthians 13:1–7

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 13:1–7 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 13:1–7 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 13:1–7 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the first part of 1 Corinthians, chapter 13, verses 1 to 7, Paul talks to the Corinthians about different kinds of gifts. Paul has just finished talking to the Corinthians about different gifts that they may want. Paul made the point in the previous part of Paul's letter that some gifts are more valuable than others. But now Paul tells the believers something more important for them to know. Paul tells the believers that even if the believers have these great gifts—like speaking in tongues, having the gift of prophecy, knowing all mysteries and all knowledge, having all faith so that the believers can move mountains, giving away everything the believers own, and giving away their bodies to be burned—even if they have these gifts but do not have love, these gifts really are not important or helpful. These gifts will not bring any good things to the believers or to other people. In fact, Paul says that if somebody has these gifts and does not have love, then they are like a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. Gongs and cymbals are musical instruments that people make out of flattened-out metal. People hit these instruments with a stick or a hammer, and the instruments make a very loud, ringing sound. People use these instruments in a way similar to drums to make a rhythm, or a sound that repeats over and over. People could play gongs and cymbals very skillfully. But if a skilled person did not play these instruments, the instruments did not produce beautiful music—the instruments just made a lot of noise.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group. How would you describe the kind of sound a person makes when they play an instrument badly? Pause this audio here.

In the second part of this passage, Paul talks about what love actually looks like. Paul makes a point that love is a certain way of acting or being. Paul talks about love as though love is a character that can do things or take actions. What Paul means is that if somebody is a loving person who loves others in a good and God-honoring way, then that person will do certain things and not do certain other things. Paul says that love is patient and love is kind. Then Paul talks about certain things that love does not do. Paul lists some of these things that love will not do. It seems clear that the Corinthians were doing some of these bad things. The Corinthians were famous for being arrogant and boasting. The Corinthians thought that the Corinthians had great knowledge and wisdom because of all the Corinthians' great learning. The Corinthians were often proud. The Corinthians would become jealous when somebody had something, like some kind of knowledge or wisdom, that the Corinthians did not have. The Corinthians wanted these things for themselves so that people would see the Corinthians as special, important, and filled with wisdom and knowledge. As Paul says these things, Paul likely

thinks that the Corinthians think the Corinthians are very important and special people because of how wise the Corinthians are and how much the Corinthians know. So Paul tells the Corinthians different things that the Corinthians should not do if the Corinthians are loving.

Then Paul talks about what it looks like if somebody loves in the way that a person *should* love. Paul does this by treating love like a person who can do certain things. Paul says that love bears all things, that love believes, that love hopes all things, and that love endures all things. When Paul says that love bears all things, Paul uses a word that means to carry—love carries all things. Paul is thinking about things that are very difficult. Paul talks about these difficult things as though there is some kind of heavy weight that people carry. If somebody loves in a way that pleases God, then that person will be willing to carry hard things.

Now, specifically, when Paul thinks about these hard things, it seems likely that Paul was thinking about the kinds of problems that the Corinthians were facing. We remember that, among other things, the Corinthians had been trying to take each other in front of the judge because the Corinthians thought that another person had wronged the Corinthians, and the Corinthians wanted the judge to make that other person have to pay for what that person had done. Paul is trying to change the way the Corinthians think about these things. Paul says that love is not just about getting the good thing you think you deserve, or about receiving the most knowledge or prophecies for yourself. Those things can be good, but according to Paul, when someone loves, that person is willing to carry, or endure, hard things, even when someone does something wrong against that person. Paul is specifically talking about people within the church. This is why Paul told the Corinthians earlier that if a Christian thinks they have been wronged by another Christian, that Christian should not take the other Christian to court. That Christian should not take the other Christian in front of a judge to try to get the good thing that Christian thinks they want from the other Christian. Instead, that Christian should be willing to carry the hard thing of being wronged by that other Christian in order to show love.

Love should believe all things. This does not mean that if somebody loves someone, that person should believe everything that the other person tells that person. Instead, what this really means is that in all things, if someone loves, that person continues to believe that something good can happen. So that person continues to carry the hard things. That person continues to believe. That person continues to hope, or confidently expect that Jesus has saved that person from that person's sins. No matter what happens, that is what love is like according to what Paul says.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group. What are some ways in your culture that a person can love the way Paul is talking about?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 13:1–7 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul tells the people that the gifts that the people have been looking for are only valuable if the people have love.

In the second part: Paul tells the people what love is like. Paul also tells the people what love is not like. Paul does this by telling the people the different kinds of things that love does not do.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- And other people

In part one, Paul is talking about the different gifts that the believers in Corinth have been looking for. Paul tells the believers that if a believer gets those gifts, but does not have love, then that believer will actually be a person who is the opposite of what that believer thinks that gift says about that believer.

The first gift Paul talks about is the gift of speaking in tongues. Now, we can remember that in Corinth, having knowledge and wisdom was a way to get honor from other people. So for the believers in Corinth, being able to speak in tongues meant that someone was especially knowledgeable and wise. But Paul is saying that even if a believer can do this gift, even if that believer can speak in the tongues of men and angels, if that believer does not have love, then that believer no longer says anything wise or full of knowledge. That believer is no longer saying knowledgeable things. In fact, Paul says that the believer is like a musical instrument that is just making noise instead of playing beautiful music.

Next, Paul talks about having the gift of prophecy, and knowing all mysteries, and having all knowledge. And Paul talks about a person who has so much faith, or belief, that this person can move mountains. The people who have the gift of prophecy, and knowing all mysteries, and having all knowledge, would be attractive to the Corinthians, because the Corinthians loved wisdom and knowledge, because wisdom and knowledge gave the Corinthians honor and made the Corinthians look great in front of other people. To the Corinthian believers, having the gift of prophecy meant that the believers would get special knowledge directly from God. Knowing all mysteries meant that all of the things that were important to understand about the gospel would be something that the believers would understand. And having all knowledge meant that there was nothing that the believers would not know. This would make the believers great in the eyes of everyone else. And if the believers had enough faith, or believed enough to move mountains, then not only would the believers have all of the knowledge and all of the wisdom that they wanted, but the believers would be able to do something with that knowledge and wisdom. The believers would be able to do great things. And it would be clear to everyone around the believers that the believers were the ones who were the wisest and the greatest. But Paul tells the believers that if the believers have all this knowledge and wisdom and faith, but the believers do not have love, then the believers are not actually the greatest. The believers are nothing. The believers are nobody.

Finally, Paul says that the believers gain nothing even if the believers give away everything the believers own to the poor, and even if the believers give away their own bodies to be burned. When Paul says that the people give away their bodies to be burned, it seems clear that Paul talks about the way that people in power were hunting Christians, hurting Christians, killing Christians, and using fire to burn Christians to death. Paul is saying that if the Christians give away everything the Christians have to the poor, and if the Christians even give themselves away, allowing themselves to be killed for the name of Christ, the Christians still gain nothing. If the Christians do not have love, then all the good things that God promised to the Christians for doing these kinds of things will not even come to the Christians, because the Christians did these things without love. Depending on what translation you are using, that translation may not say that the Christians gave their bodies over to be burned. The translation may say that the Christians gave their bodies over to boast. There are different reasons why a translation might choose to say burned or might choose to say boast. But in either case, the message is the same. If the Christians gave everything the Christians had to the poor, and even allowed people to kill the Christians because the Christians followed Christ, then none of the good things that the Christians hoped would come would actually come to the Christians, all because the Christians did not have love.

In part two, Paul says more about love. Paul has just finished telling the Christians about how important love is. And now Paul is going to tell the Christians what it will look like if the Christians act in a loving way. Paul is also going to tell the Christians what it will look like if the Christians do not act in a loving way. Paul bases Paul's description of what love is, and what love is not, on all the things Paul knows about how the Christians have been acting. Paul begins by telling the Christians that love is patient, kind, and not envious. Paul says this because Paul knows that the Corinthians have been jealous of other people. The Christians have been looking at the good things—the knowledge and wisdom—that the Christians think others have. The Christians have been wanting those things for themselves. Paul says that love does not brag and it is not puffed up, or arrogant. These are just ways of saying that if somebody is loving, that person is not going to be spending their effort telling others about how great that person is. Paul says that love is not rude and love is not self-serving. These are ways of showing that if the Christians actions are loving, then the Christians are going to be loving toward other people. The Christians are not just going to be thinking about themselves, and the Christians are not going to be treating others in a bad way. Paul says that love does not get angry easily. Love does not resent easily. These are just ways of talking about the way that someone who is loving will treat other people—that this person will not become angry easily because of something someone else does, and this person will not resent the other person, or stay angry with the other person over something that happened in the past. Paul says that love is not glad about unjust things. Instead, when a person loves, that person feels joy because of what is true.

This is a reminder to the Corinthians that if the Corinthians focus on loving others, then the Corinthians will not praise what is wrong, but instead the Corinthians will praise what is good and true and right and beautiful.

At the end, Paul gives a definition of what is important to know about love: that love bears hard things, that love believes, that love hopes, and that love endures, or continues to love even when hard things happen.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 13:1–7 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- And other people

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul talks to the people in the church of Corinth. Paul talks to the people about the different gifts that the people should seek. In the chapter before this chapter, Paul just told the people which gifts were the most important. Now, in this part, Paul tells the people that if the people have those gifts but do not have love, then the people are still missing something very important. When you act this out, you may decide to have Paul show what it looks like when someone has these gifts, and then show what it looks like when someone has these gifts but does not have love.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I hope that people will understand that even though these gifts are very important, if they do not have love, then the person with these gifts is nothing. The person is not important at all;" or
- "I want people to understand that love is the most important thing for a Christian to try to get. Love is more important even than wisdom and knowledge."

Now, in the second part, Paul talks about love, which is the most important thing that Christians should seek. You can choose to act out what love looks like. Show that love is patient and kind. You can also show examples of what it looks like to not love, and then show Paul telling people not to do this thing.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want people to understand that these are just examples of what it means to love, and it is not the full picture of what love means;" or
- "I want people to know that the way they have been acting is the opposite of what it means to love."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 13:1–7 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

As Paul discusses with the Corinthians the different kinds of gifts the Corinthians desire, Paul talks to the Corinthians about what will happen if the Corinthians have these gifts but do not have love. The first gift that Paul talks about is the gift of **tongues**. "Tongues" is the ability that the Holy Spirit gives to people to be able to speak in a language that these people do not understand. This can be a language spoken by other people, or it can also be a language spoken by angels. Use the same word or phrase for tongues as you used in previous passages. For more information on tongues, refer to the Master Glossary.

Paul also mentions **angels**. Angels are supernatural beings, or spiritual beings. God made angels so that angels would serve God and help God's people. Angels often bring messages to the people of God. Use the same word or phrase for angels as you used in previous passages. For more information on angels, refer to the Master Glossary.

Another one of the gifts that Paul talks about is having the gift of **prophecy**. Prophecy is what we call it when someone gives a message that God gave to that person. Prophecy is a message that God gave to that person by God's Holy Spirit. In this sense, prophecy is a message that comes directly from God, although that message comes through the voice of another person as they speak. Prophecy is usually a message that is important to God's people. This can be a message of warning that warns the people about judgment or warns them about hard things that will come. It can also be a message of encouragement. But in all cases, these messages were supposed to build up the church and to strengthen God's people. The Bible also makes it clear that people should test these messages of prophecy to see if the messages are true. If the messages are true, then the messages came from God. If the messages are not true, then the messages did not come from God. And if the prophecy is not intended to build up the church, then the prophecy did not come from God. Use the same word or phrase for prophecy as you used in previous passages. For more information on prophecy, refer to the Master Glossary.

Next, Paul talks about knowing all **mysteries** and having all knowledge. In Paul's letters, when Paul talks about mysteries, Paul talks about the things that are important to know about God's plan to save the world through Christ. These are things that people did not know in the past, but which have been made clear now in the time of Christ.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **mysteries**. Use the same word here that you have used in previous passages. Pause this audio here.

Paul also talks about **faith**. When Paul talks about faith, Paul does not just talk about the general belief in God. Paul talks about a belief in who God is and a belief that God answers prayers. We know this because the passage specifically talks about a faith that can move mountains. So the passage talks about this idea of somebody who has so much faith that they can pray in the name of Jesus that a mountain should be moved and the mountain will actually move.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **faith**. Look up faith in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, or this book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Next, Paul talks about what will happen if a person gives away everything a person owns, even giving away that person's own body. Now, depending on the translation you are reading, you may see something like, "Give away my body in order to be burned." Or you may see something that says, "Give away my body in order to boast." There are good arguments supporting each of these translations, but it may be best to consider what other translations your people will be familiar with. If your people are used to hearing "burned," it may be best to choose to say burn here. If your people are used to hearing "boast," it may be best to consider saying boast here.

Stop here and discuss if you will say that Paul gives away his body to be burned, or to boast. Pause this audio here.

After this, Paul says some things about love. Paul says some things about love that are true. Paul says love is patient, and love is kind. Paul then says some things that should definitely not happen with a true kind of love. Paul says that love does not brag and it is not puffed up. "Puffed up" is a way of talking about somebody who thinks that they are more important than that person really is. Puffed up is a way of describing somebody who believes themselves to be better than others.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "puffed up." Use the same word or phrase for puffed up or arrogant that you have used in previous passages. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, or **evil**. Evil is when people do wrong or bad things that are not right or fair. Use the same word for evil that you have used in previous passages, and see evil in the Master Glossary for more information.

Paul says that love always **hopes**, or confidently expects the best in someone or some situation.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **hope**. If you have translated hope in another book of the Bible, use that word here. For more information about hope, see the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 13:1-7

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 13:8–13

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 13:8–13 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 13:8–13 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 13:8–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this passage, Paul makes the point that love is the most important thing for believers because love will not stop. We know that this is Paul's main point because Paul makes this point in the beginning of the passage and at the end of the passage. We remember from the passage before this passage that Paul was telling believers in Corinth that all the gifts that the believers were trying to get—gifts of prophecy, gifts of speaking in tongues,

and gifts of special knowledge about the gospel—were all good things. But if the believers did not have love, then those gifts were not very good at all. The gifts were not doing any good thing for the people who had those gifts.

In this passage, Paul explains why love is so much better. The point Paul makes is that love will not stop. Gifts of prophecy and gifts of speaking in tongues and special knowledge about the gospel—those things will stop someday. Paul does not say exactly when that will happen, but we know from other parts of the New Testament, and other things Paul has written, that Paul is thinking about the time when Jesus will return. Jesus will return and make the world new. Jesus will remake the world, and Jesus will remake the world without any sin. All sin will be put to an end. Sin will be stopped. There will be no more sin. The world will be made new and perfect.

Because Jesus will be there, and because God will be present in this new Earth, we will understand more of who God is because we will have the real God there with us. A gift of prophecy is just hearing a message from God directly by God's spirit. When God is there among us, we no longer will need a message. When Jesus is there and we can speak to Jesus, we will no longer need the tongues of men and angels. Everything will be made right. We will be able to speak to each other and to Jesus.

We do not have full knowledge of all of the many details about what the gospel means. We know enough to be saved. We know the things that God has shown us about the good news of Jesus in God's Word. But when Jesus returns, Jesus will destroy sin and Jesus will make the world new. All the people who are believers will understand all the full and good details about the gospel, because we will be living in the kingdom of God in the fullest sense of what that means, and with all of the details and knowledge that we need. So Paul is saying that these things that give us a partial idea of the gospel—prophecy, speaking in tongues, special knowledge about the gospel—these things are good. But then the better thing comes—the real, full presence of God in a newly made Earth where everything is right and sin is completely stopped forever. Then those things that give us an incomplete picture of the gospel will stop and we will have a more complete understanding of everything because God will be there with us.

Now Paul compares Paul's knowledge to a child. A child has a way of thinking and understanding things. And that way is good for a child. But normally, when a child becomes an adult, that person has a more complete way of thinking and understanding. And so the childish way of thinking and understanding—although it was good for a child—stops when the child becomes an adult. And instead of a childish way of thinking, now that person has an adult way of thinking and understanding that is more complete.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In what way is a child's understanding of things different from an adult's understanding of things? Pause this audio here.

Paul also makes it clear that this is kind of like looking in a mirror. Corinth was famous for making good mirrors. Mirrors back then were just pieces of metal that people polished well. People rubbed and rubbed the metal until those people could see a reflection.

Stop here and look at an image of a mirror that is like the kind of mirror the Corinthians would have used. Pause this audio here.

Sometimes these mirrors were good. Other times the mirrors were not as good as the mirrors that we have today. Whether you are looking at one of those mirrors from that time, or a mirror from now, you are still looking at a picture of the real thing, but it is not as good as the real thing. It is not as clear as the real thing. It is not the real thing. And when you have the real thing in front of you, then the picture of it can go away. And so this is Paul's point: We can have a prophetic word, and we can speak in tongues, and we can have knowledge about the gospel. Those things are good, but they are only a reflection. They are just a picture of the real thing. And some day the real thing—Jesus himself—will come to us when Jesus returns. Prophetic messages, speaking in tongues, and having special knowledge about the gospel will stop one day. What will not stop when Jesus returns are three things: faith, hope, and love. Faith is continuing to believe in Christ and who Christ is. Hope is the expectation that God will continue to do what God promised God would do. And that will not stop. And love is when we continue to love God and others. And that also will not stop. These three things will not stop. Paul says that the most important of all three of these things is love.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 13:8–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul is telling the believers in Corinth that love will not stop. Love will not end. But the gifts of prophecy, and of tongues, and of having special knowledge about the gospel, those things will stop. Those things will end.

In the second part: Paul gives more information to help explain these things.

In the third part: Paul says again that there are certain things that will not stop—faith, hope, and love. But Paul says that the greatest of these things is love.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul, as a child and as an adult
- And other believers

As you act this passage out, you may want to show love continuing and not ending even when Christ returns. You can show somebody giving a prophetic message, speaking in tongues, and speaking very knowledgeably about the gospel. You can show that these things do stop when Christ returns. Be sure to make clear what Paul means here. Your translation may talk about this in different ways, but in general, when Paul talks about this, Paul says that *if* there is prophecy, *if* there are tongues, *if* there is knowledge. Of course, Paul does not mean that Paul is not sure if these things exist or not. Paul is saying that you may have someone in your church who can do these things. You may have someone in your church who can speak in tongues, someone who can prophesy, or someone who has knowledge. But those things will all stop.

You may also show Paul as a child. You can show that Paul is thinking in a certain way as a child and talking in a certain way as a child. But then show Paul becoming an adult. Show that Paul is not thinking and talking in that childlike way anymore. Paul has a new way of thinking and talking now that Paul is an adult. And you can show Paul and other believers looking in a mirror. You may consider showing how Paul and the other believers are working hard to see what is in the mirror. But then when Jesus comes, Jesus takes away the mirror. And now Paul and the other believers see everything very clearly. Paul and the other believers are happy to see everything clearly and with more detail because they have the real thing in front of them and not just the reflection in the mirror.

You can also talk about what it is like to know something in part and then to know it fully. Maybe you know something with some of the details, but you have an incomplete understanding of that thing. And then later you know that thing with more details and with a complete understanding. An example of this might be somebody who grew up in a village, and who had an idea of what it was like to live in a big city. That person knew some things about living in a big city, but they did not know everything. Then later, after that person visited the big city, that person had a complete idea of what the big city was like.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: When you think about a child who grew up in the village, and the way that person understood what a big city was like, how is that different from how that same person understands a big city after they finally visit the city as an adult? Pause this audio here.

When Paul talks about knowing fully just as Paul has been fully known, Paul is talking about the time when Jesus returns. And at that time, Paul's knowledge of the gospel, and Paul's knowledge of Paul's relationship with Jesus, will be full and complete. In the same way, Jesus already knows Paul fully—God already knows Paul in a complete way.

Depending on what translation you are reading, Paul may say something now to get the focus away from all the detailed descriptions that Paul gave and come back to Paul's main point. Paul's main point is that faith, hope,

and love continue even after Jesus returns. Remember that prophecies, tongues, and special knowledge about the gospel will come to an end. But love will not come to an end. It may be good to find a way to show that Paul is talking about Paul's main point now.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group. How will you make it clear that Paul is finishing Paul's explanation and that Paul is now coming back to Paul's main point? Pause this audio here.

So, Paul makes the point that faith, hope, and love remain. These things continue. These things do not stop. And so you can show all these things, and you can show that love is the most important of these things.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul, as a child and as an adult
- And other believers

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

You may decide that you want to show Paul loving and to show that this does not stop. And you can show that Paul is giving a prophetic message, and then Paul stops giving the message. Then show that Paul is speaking in tongues, and then Paul stops speaking. Show that Paul is speaking in a way that shows Paul's great knowledge, and then Paul also stops speaking like this. Now, just to be clear, it does not have to be Paul who does these things. You may decide that when you act this out, you want a person in the church to do these things: to prophesy, to speak in tongues, to show that this person has knowledge about the gospel. Either one of these can be okay. And in fact, this could make sense, because when Paul talks about this, Paul says the *if* there is prophecy, *if* there are tongues, *if* there is knowledge. Of course, Paul does not mean *if* in the sense of not being sure if these things exist or not. Paul is not saying, "Well, I do not know if they exist or if they are real." What Paul is saying is, "You may have someone in your church who can do this. You may have someone in your church who can speak in tongues, someone who can prophesy, someone who has knowledge. But those things will all stop."

Now you can decide to have Paul as a child. You can show that Paul is thinking like a child and talking like a child and understanding like a child. And then you can show Paul become an adult. Show that Paul no longer thinks and talks and understands in this childlike way. But now Paul speaks and thinks and talks like an adult.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am happy that I no longer act and think and understand like a child;" or
- "Even though it was good to think like a child when I was a child, now that I am an adult, it is so much better to think and talk and understand like an adult."

Next, you can have Paul and the other people look in a mirror. You can show that they are working very hard to understand what it is they are seeing in the mirror because the mirror does not have a good reflection. Now you can show that the thing that Paul and the other people try to see in the mirror is clearly standing right in front of Paul and the other people, and the mirror is gone. And you can show that Paul and the others are very happy to see clearly the thing that they were trying to see in the mirror.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing these other people, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am very happy to see clearly the thing that I could not see very well in the mirror;" or
- "I am surprised. There were details about the thing I looked at that I could not see until it was standing right in front of me face-to-face."

Now you can show that faith, hope, and love continue. These things do not stop. But you can show that the most important and greatest thing is love.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 13:8–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

In this passage, Paul mentions **prophecy**. Prophecy is a message that comes directly from God through God's Holy Spirit. This message usually helps God's people. Sometimes it is a message of judgment, telling people about judgment that will come for sin. This can be either the sins of God's people or the sins of others. And sometimes it is a message of encouragement. Use the same word or phrase for prophecy as you used in previous passages. For more information on prophecy, refer to the Master Glossary.

Paul also talks about **tongues**. The gift of tongues is when someone speaks in a language that they do not normally understand. This can be the language of other people, or it can be the language of angels. Use the same word or phrase for tongues as you used in previous passages. For more information on tongues, refer to the Master Glossary.

Paul talks about **faith**. Faith is belief. Here Paul is talking about believing and trusting in God. Use the same word or phrase for faith as you used in previous passages. For more information on faith, refer to the Master Glossary.

Paul also talks about **hope**. In this case hope is when somebody confidently believes that God will keep God's promises. Use the same word or phrase for hope as you used in previous passages. For more information on hope, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (14514516 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 6](#)

1 Corinthians 14:1-5

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 14:1-5 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:1-5 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:1–5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this part of Paul's letter, Paul talks about the spiritual gifts of speaking in tongues and prophesying. Paul explains how the people should use these gifts in public gatherings. Paul says that loving other people is the most important thing. But Paul also encourages the believers in the church in Corinth to want to have spiritual gifts or special abilities, especially the ability to speak messages from God that help other people. Paul then talks about two specific gifts. First, Paul talks about the gift of being able to speak in a special language that only God can understand. This gift is called the gift of tongues. Paul also talks about the gift of being able to bring messages from God that everyone can understand. This gift is called the gift of prophecy. Paul says the gift of prophecy is a more useful gift for the entire church, because when someone uses the gift, that person can encourage and teach the believers.

In previous parts of Paul's letter, Paul explained that the best way to live was to follow the way of love, or to love God and other people in the best way possible. If we do not love God and other people, all of our trust in God and all of our spiritual gifts are not useful. Paul now begins Paul's instructions for how the believers in Corinth should worship together and encourage other believers. Paul tells the believers to focus on loving other people first. The believers should both seek to love other people and seek spiritual gifts. Paul says the believers should strongly desire, or want, to have spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to a person. When the Holy Spirit comes over a person, that person receives a special power or ability. Out of all the spiritual gifts, Paul says the believers should especially want the ability to prophesy or speak God's messages because it will help the other believers in Corinth.

Paul explains why the gift of prophecy is a more important gift for the gathering of the church than speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift that allows people to speak in a special language that only God understands unless someone interprets or explains the meaning of the words. When a person speaks in tongues, the person is speaking in a language that other people around them do not understand. The person is speaking only to God, praying to God, and worshiping God. The person is speaking about secret or unknown things with the help of the Holy Spirit. When a person speaks in tongues, that person may feel closer to God, but it only helps the person who is speaking. It does not strengthen or encourage other believers. But a person who prophesies, or speaks a message from God, speaks in a language that everyone can understand. These messages help people feel comforted, stronger, and encouraged. When someone prophesies, that person helps the whole church, so Paul says this is a better gift to use when everyone is together. Church here refers to the group of believers in Corinth, not to a physical building.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time when you helped someone by giving them advice or encouragement when they needed it. How did that person respond? How does it feel to know that you can make a difference by helping others? Pause this audio here.

Paul says Paul wishes everyone could speak in tongues, but Paul thinks it is even more important for the believers to speak messages from God that other believers can understand. Paul says that speaking in tongues can be a useful gift in a group for encouraging other people. Tongues can be useful if a person can explain the meaning of what that person is saying in a language that other people can understand. If the person who speaks

in tongues cannot explain the meaning to others, or no other person around that person can explain the meaning, then what that person says is not helpful to anyone but the person who speaks it. But when someone shares a message from God that everyone can understand, it helps the whole church or group of people.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time when you have been part of a group where someone's actions in the group helped everyone, not just that person themselves. How did that person's help make the group feel? How do you think helping others makes a community stronger? Pause this audio here.

Paul wants the believers in Corinth to understand that people should use the spiritual gifts, or special abilities God gives to each believer, to help everyone and not to help themselves. These gifts are meant to make the whole group stronger and happier and to help the group grow. So people should use gifts like prophecy to help the entire community of believers.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:1–5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Just as in previous passages, Paul encourages the believers in Corinth to focus on loving other people. Paul encourages the believers to want spiritual gifts that help the whole group rather than gifts that only help that person. Paul explains that speaking in a language that only God understands does not help other people. But speaking a message that everyone understands is more useful to the other believers.

In the second part: Paul explains that when someone speaks a message from God that is easy to understand, the message helps build up, encourage, and strengthen the faith of the group.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God
- Holy Spirit
- Believers who listen as someone reads the letter out loud
- Believers who speak in tongues
- And believers with the gift of prophecy

Paul is teaching the believers in Corinth how to act in their gatherings when they come together to worship. Paul uses a style of speaking that explains what is important and why it is important. In the earlier part of Paul's letter, Paul had already talked about spiritual gifts. Paul then explained that the gifts are not useful unless the believers love God and love each other. Now, Paul once again speaks to the believers about spiritual gifts and explains more about how to use those gifts, especially as the believers are loving each other well. Paul wants the believers to focus on using their spiritual gifts in a way that helps other believers and does not just help the person who uses the gift.

In the first part of this passage, Paul tells the believers to pursue love, or to follow the way of love. Paul wants the believers to be eager in the way the believers try to love and care for other people. In the original language, the word for pursue means to hunt. Paul wants the believers to chase or hunt love as though it were something valuable and important. The believers should pursue, or follow, the love for other people in the way that Paul has taught the believers.

Paul shifts the focus from talking about love to talking about how to use spiritual gifts. Paul says that believers should want spiritual gifts, but the believers should focus on wanting gifts that help other believers and do not

just help the person who uses the gift. Paul says the best gift is the gift of prophecy. The gift of prophecy is the ability to speak a message from God to other believers that the other believers can understand.

Paul explains that if a person speaks in tongues—a language that only God can understand—that person only talks to God. No one else in the group can learn or benefit from the words. But if a person shares a message that everyone can understand, it helps the other believers to grow and get stronger spiritually. Paul wants the believers to focus on using gifts that build up, encourage, and strengthen the other believers. Paul is probably explaining this to the believers because many of them were speaking in tongues in public gatherings. The people speaking in tongues in public gatherings perhaps did not understand that it was not helpful to other believers. Or perhaps some of the people speaking in tongues wanted to show other believers their spiritual gifts. Paul says that a person speaking in tongues is speaking secrets or mysteries in the spirit. Secrets or mysteries means things or truths that most people do not know. When a person speaks in tongues, the person does not know what they are saying. Some people think spirit here means a person's own spirit—the invisible part of a person that has thoughts and feelings. But most people think spirit is referring to the Spirit of God or Holy Spirit. When a person is speaking in tongues, the Holy Spirit is causing the person to speak these truths.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you translate the idea of speaking these hidden truths "in the spirit," or by the power of the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.

In the second part of this passage, Paul talks about why it is better to use the gift of prophecy in gatherings than the gift of tongues. Paul says that when someone speaks a message from God in a way everyone can understand, it helps the other believers. This kind of message builds up the believers, it makes the believers stronger, and it helps the believers to grow in the believers' faith.

Paul ends by reminding the believers that the goal of the believers' gatherings should be to build up the other believers. Speaking in a language no one understands only helps the person speaking, but sharing a clear message from God helps everyone.

Paul makes it clear that speaking in tongues is a good gift for an individual believer. In fact, Paul would like everyone to be able to speak in tongues. The problem only comes when people speak in tongues in public gatherings where there is no explanation of the meaning of the words they are speaking. Speaking in tongues and not explaining the meaning is likely what the believers in Corinth had been doing. The person speaking in tongues, or maybe another person hearing the person speaking in tongues, may be able to explain the meaning of the words. The Holy Spirit sometimes helps a person to understand and gives the person an explanation. If the meaning of the words can be explained, then Paul says speaking in tongues can be helpful and good for other people. But if no one can explain the meaning of what the person speaking in tongues is saying, then speaking in tongues does not benefit anyone else hearing it. Paul knows that speaking in tongues is a valuable gift for a person. Speaking in tongues helps a person to communicate with God in a way that is beyond that person's own understanding. Paul himself speaks in tongues. However, Paul wants the believers to focus on using gifts that are for the benefit of everyone in the church in Corinth. Church here does not refer to a physical building. Church refers to the believers in Corinth. Paul ends this passage by saying that prophecy is a greater gift than the gift of speaking in tongues in church, or public gatherings. Paul means that when someone uses the gift of prophecy, that person is helping people more.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: How might you describe two different behaviours that are both good, but one behaviour is better or more helpful to other people than the other behaviour? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to have drawings, objects, or even people representing Paul, the believers, God, and the Holy Spirit. You might want to split the people or objects representing believers into two groups. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, remember that Paul is trying to guide the believers on how to use their spiritual gifts. Paul talks about the difference between speaking in a way that only helps one person and speaking in a way that helps the other believers. Paul then encourages the believers to focus on messages from God that are clear and helpful to everyone. Perhaps have one person from one group speak or communicate to the others in that group in a way that the others cannot understand. Now ask one person in the second group to share something encouraging with the others in their group.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:1–5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God
- Holy Spirit
- Believers who listen as someone reads the letter out loud
- Believers who speak in tongues
- And believers with the gift of prophecy

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "Follow the way of love and desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. If you speak in a language no one understands, you are talking to God, not people. No one can understand what you are saying. You are speaking mysteries in the spirit."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer:

- "I want the believers to focus on helping the other believers, not just themselves;" or
- "I am worried the believers do not see how important it is to make sure everyone understands;" or
- "I want the believers to use their gifts in ways that build up the whole church."

Next, Paul says, "But the one who prophesies speaks to people to strengthen, encourage, and comfort those people. Anyone who speaks in tongues strengthens himself, but the one who prophesies strengthens the church."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" A believer might answer things like:

- "I see now that helping others is more important than showing off my own gifts;" or
- "I want to learn how to share God's message in a way everyone can understand;" or
- "I want to have the gift of prophecy so that I can help the whole group grow stronger;" or
- "Surely, it is good for others to see me speaking in tongues and seeing my spiritual gift so they can see that God is present;" or
- "I do not have the gift of tongues, so I feel relieved that I do not have to feel less important than everyone else now. People will not just speak in tongues to show off their gifts any more."

Paul says, "I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather you have prophecy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone explains so that God may make the church strong."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer:

- "I want the believers to see that the believers should use their gifts for the good of other people;" or
- "I hope the believers understand that building up the church is the most important thing;" or
- "I am trying to guide the believers toward using their gifts wisely. I know that speaking in tongues can be good, and helpful, but only if someone can explain the meaning."

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" These people might answer things like:

- "I understand now that prophecy helps everyone grow together;" or
- "I feel encouraged to focus on what benefits the whole church and not just myself;" or
- "I want to have the greatest gift, so I will ask the Holy Spirit for the gift of prophecy."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:1–5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul starts by telling the believers to follow the **way of love** and to desire spiritual gifts. Think about how you translated the idea of a better or more excellent way at the end of chapter 12. Try to translate the idea of the "way of love" in a similar way to what you said there.

Spiritual gifts are special abilities that the Holy Spirit gives people. Just like in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 1, the word in the original language is really "spiritual things," but most translations choose to say spiritual gifts, since that is what Paul goes on to talk about. If you choose to, use the same word or phrase for spiritual gifts as you used in previous passages. Gift, or spiritual gift, is in the Master Glossary.

Paul says the believers should especially want the gift of **prophecy**. In the New Testament, Paul teaches us that the Holy Spirit gives some people the ability to speak prophecies. Through the Holy Spirit, God can give these believers some special knowledge or insight that is for the good of the church. Paul calls this the gift of prophecy. Not every believer may have this gift, because the Holy Spirit gives different gifts to different people. Use the

same word or phrase for prophecy as you used in previous passages. For more information on the gift of prophecy, look up prophecy in the Master Glossary.

Paul explains that someone who speaks in **tongues** speaks to God, not to people, because other people cannot understand what the person is saying. When someone speaks "in tongues," it means that the person has a special gift from the Holy Spirit to speak in a language they do not themselves understand. Use the same word or phrase for tongues as you used in previous passages. For more information, look up tongues in the Master Glossary.

When a person speaks in tongues, that person speaks by the power of the Spirit. This is the **Holy Spirit**, or the Spirit of God. When the Spirit of God comes over a person, that person receives a special power or ability. Use the same word or phrase for Spirit or Holy Spirit as you used in previous passages. For more information, look up Holy Spirit in the Master Glossary.

In this unknown language, the people are praising God or speaking some **mystery** about God. You will remember that mysteries are truths that were a secret, but God is now telling or revealing that secret. This is not a secret people are finding for themselves, but God's Spirit is showing people this truth. Use the same word or phrase for mystery that you have used in previous passages.

Paul contrasts speaking in tongues with prophecy. When someone prophesies, that person speaks to people to **build up, encourage, and comfort** those people. When someone builds someone up, they help people grow stronger in their faith and character. Then people will grow to trust and understand God more and try to behave and live in a way that is pleasing to God. When someone encourages someone else, that person gives strength and hope to someone. When someone comforts someone else, that person gives relief or soothes someone who is troubled. God means for people to use prophecy to help the whole church, while speaking in tongues helps only the person who is speaking unless someone can interpret what that person says.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for building up, encouraging, and comforting people.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 14:1–5

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (13855683 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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1 Corinthians 14:6–19

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 14:6–19 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:6–19 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:6–19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this part of Paul's letter, Paul continues to explain why it is important for the believers to only speak in ways that other people can understand when the believers gather to worship. Paul focuses again on the gift of tongues, which is when someone speaks in a special language that only God understands. Paul has just finished explaining how the gift of tongues is not as important as the gift of prophecy in the church gatherings.

Now Paul continues to give the believers reasons that it is important that people understand what each other is saying in the church meetings. Paul compares speaking in tongues to hearing different sounds that are not alive, such as instruments that make sounds, or hearing a person speak in a foreign language, which is a different language than what people usually speak in a person's country. Paul uses these comparisons to show the believers that if a person cannot understand what someone else is saying, then the words those people say are useless or have no value to the person who hears those words. Paul emphasizes that clear communication is important so that the church can grow in their faith.

Paul speaks to all believers in Corinth, both men and women. Paul uses himself as an example, and Paul starts by asking a question. Paul asks the believers to imagine that Paul comes to the church in Corinth and speaks in tongues, a language only God understands. Paul asks, "How will that help the believers?" Since the believers cannot understand what Paul is saying, Paul's words cannot help the believers. If Paul comes to the believers speaking in an understandable way, and Paul shares special messages and truths from God, or brings teaching about God, Paul will help the believers by encouraging the believers and helping the believers grow spiritually.

Paul uses examples or comparisons to help the believers understand why it is important that the believers use spiritual gifts that other people can understand when the believers worship together. Paul compares speaking in tongues to playing musical instruments, like a flute or a harp. If a person plays these musical instruments without making clear sounds or playing notes that are different from one another, the sound that comes from the instrument will have no meaning to the person listening. People make a flute or pipe from either reeds, ivory, bronze, silver, or gold. A flute or pipe is hollow, with holes along the length of the flute or pipe. A person uses their fingers to cover different holes along the length of the musical instrument at the same time that the person blows into the instrument to make different sounds. A harp is a large stringed instrument with a wooden frame. People pluck the strings to create sound.

Stop here and look at a picture of a flute and harp as a group. When have you heard someone playing an instrument well, and when have you heard someone playing an instrument badly? How did you feel when you heard people playing well, and badly? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and also discuss the following question: Talk about a time when you have been in a situation where someone was talking, but you could not understand that person. How did this affect your ability to understand what was happening? Pause this audio here.

Paul gives another example using instruments, but this time, in a battle setting. Military officers would use different signals that they played on a trumpet or bugle to instruct the soldiers when it was time to attack or retreat in battle. If the trumpet just makes a sound, but the soldiers do not know what the sound means, then the soldiers will not know how to act. Sound by itself in these cases is useless. Paul is showing the believers that this is the same as when the believers speak in tongues without anyone explaining the meaning of the words the believers speak. If the other believers do not understand the words believers speak when they speak in tongues, then the words have no value to the people who hear them. Paul says this would be like speaking to the air, which means the words would be wasted and the words would not help anyone. Paul says that when the believers speak, the believers should speak in a way that other believers can understand, so everyone can learn and be encouraged. A trumpet or bugle is a wind instrument. The people usually make a trumpet or bugle out of silver or bronze. A trumpet or bugle is a straight, metal tube, with one end flared into a cone shape. People blow into a trumpet or bugle to make a loud sound.

Stop here and look at a picture of a trumpet or bugle as a group. Also discuss the following question: In your culture, what kinds of sounds do you have that alert you to action, such as a warning call? What would happen if you could not understand this sound? Pause this audio here.

Paul continues to give more examples of how useless words are if no one can understand those words. Paul says people speak many languages in the world. All the languages in the world have meaning to the person who is speaking them. But if the person hearing the language does not understand it, the words just become sound without any value to the listener. The people speaking to each other are like foreigners, or people from different

countries. Again, Paul says, this is the same as what the believers in Corinth are doing when the believers speak in tongues in their gatherings. Paul wants the believer who speaks in tongues in public to pray and ask God to help them understand the meaning of what they are saying so that other people can benefit from them. Paul says that the believers are eager, or strongly desire, to have spiritual gifts. But Paul says that if the believers use their spiritual gifts because they want to love other people well, then the believers should want to have spiritual gifts or special abilities that help other believers.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: What unique gifts or talents do you have, and how have those gifts or talents helped you personally? How might you use these gifts differently if you were using them mostly to love and encourage others? Pause this audio here.

Paul gives a personal example of how Paul prays and praises God in a language that only God understands. When Paul speaks in tongues, Paul speaks or praises God only in Paul's spirit, or the invisible part of Paul that thinks and feels. Paul is praying in Paul's spirit, with the help of the Holy Spirit, but Paul also wants Paul's mind to understand what Paul is saying so Paul's words can be useful to other people. In a gathering, Paul wants believers to pray and sing and worship with the believers' spirit, but also with thoughtful praise in an understandable language. Paul tells the believers in Corinth that if the believers pray or praise God in public gatherings, the believers should pray and sing in a way that their mind understands. If outsiders can understand the prayers and praises, then the outsiders can join in or say "Amen," which means "I agree." Even if a person is praising God and giving thanks well, the outsiders around the person who speaks will not learn because the outsiders cannot understand. The outsiders may be either believers or unbelievers—they are the people in the gathering who do not understand what the people who speak in tongues say.

Paul is clear that to speak in tongues is good. Paul is thankful that the Holy Spirit has given Paul this gift to speak in tongues, and Paul says Paul speaks in tongues more than anyone else. But when Paul is in a gathering of believers, Paul would rather say just a few words that other believers can understand than many words in a language that other believers do not understand. Paul wants the believers to help everyone learn and grow in their faith, and the people in Corinth should do the same.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Imagine you are part of a team that works on a project. How important is it for everyone on the team to understand the purpose? How does clear communication help the team work better together? Pause this audio here.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:6–19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul continues to explain how important it is to praise and worship God in gatherings in a way that everyone can understand. Paul uses examples of playing musical instruments with no understandable tune or hearing someone speak in a foreign language—a language from a different country.

In the second part: Paul uses himself as an example to show the believers the difference between praying and worshipping in the believers' spirits only and praying with their spirits and minds for the good of other people. Paul makes it clear that when the believers gather together, the believers should build each other up and help each other grow stronger in their faith, trust, and understanding of God.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Believers
- Person playing the flute or harp
- Military officer who plays the trumpet
- Soldiers listening to the trumpet sound
- And foreigners from other countries who speak a different language

Paul's message is for all the believers in Corinth. Some translations use the word "brothers" at the start of this passage, but Paul is speaking to both the men and women in Corinth. Paul wants to help the believers understand Paul's message by explaining in more depth the important points Paul started talking about in the previous passage. Then Paul wants to give the believers practical advice. In this passage, Paul wants to make sure the believers understand how to communicate and use their spiritual gifts in ways that help other believers grow in their faith, trust, and understanding of God.

Paul begins by asking the believers a question that Paul does not expect the believers to answer. Paul asks the believers to imagine a situation where Paul comes to the believers when the believers gather together and speaks in tongues. If the believers could not understand what Paul was saying, how would Paul's words benefit the believers? Paul uses this question to help the believers see that Paul's words would have no value to the believers if they could not understand the words. Paul then helps the believers to think about what would be helpful for the believers instead. Revelation and prophecy would help the believers because they are messages from God. Knowledge and teaching give people spiritual knowledge, and that helps people to know God better and know how to obey God better.

Paul explains that speaking in tongues, or unknown languages, is not helpful unless someone can explain the meaning of what is said. Paul once again uses questions that Paul does not expect the believers to answer: How can a person benefit from music if the music has no clear notes? Paul is trying to show the believers in Corinth that what the believers are doing when they speak in tongues is the same as someone playing an instrument such as a flute or harp with no tune.

Paul gives another example that shows what can happen when communication is not clear. On a battlefield, soldiers would know how to act depending on the particular sound or signal that the officer plays on a trumpet or bugle. If the officer did not make these particular signals, but instead made no clear sound, the soldiers would not know how to act and would be confused. The instruments would not serve their purpose—the music would not bring joy, and the trumpet would not instruct. In the same way, speaking in tongues when no one else can understand the meaning serves no purpose for anyone who hears the words. Paul emphasizes that communicating clearly with your tongue in ways that everyone can understand is necessary for building up the church. When Paul says, "with your tongue," Paul may refer to a person's physical tongue in their mouth which enables speech, or Paul may refer to when a person speaks in the gift of tongues. Most people think that tongue here means a person's physical tongue. Paul is saying that the believers must speak in a clear and understandable way.

Stop here and look at a photo of a flute, harp, and trumpet again, if needed. Also discuss the following question: How do people in your culture use language, like asking people to imagine a certain situation or comparing two things to each other, to help teach an idea or to make something more clear? Can you think of an example when someone used language in this way to teach or explain something to you? Pause this audio here.

If a person speaks in public in a way that no one understands, that person's speech is the same as if someone was speaking into the air. This is an expression that means that the words will be a waste—no one can understand the meaning of the words and therefore the words are of no use to anyone.

Stop here and discuss the following question: Think about a time when someone was speaking, but no one understood that person. What expressions, if any, do you have in your language that mean someone is wasting their time when they speak? How will you translate this expression? Pause this audio here.

Paul again gives a practical example of how words that no one understands are useless. Paul gives examples using a situation that has not happened to help people think about what could happen or what someone might do. Paul says that people speak many languages across the world. The languages people speak across the world all have meaning to the people who speak those languages, but the languages have no meaning to a foreigner from another country who hears those languages. Some translations use the word "barbarian" instead of foreigner. A barbarian is a person who is not from Greece and who speaks a different language to the Greek people. Paul is comparing this imagined situation to the real situation of when the believers speak in tongues. When believers speak in tongues, the words the believers speak have no meaning to the other believers who hear those words. The believers in Corinth were experiencing many spiritual gifts and were eager for spiritual gifts, which means the believers strongly desired spiritual gifts. The believers often wanted to show their spiritual gifts to others. But Paul tells the believers to want to have and use spiritual gifts that the believers can use to build up other believers. Just like when we build physical buildings we make them strong, Paul wants the believers to build each other up so the believers will be strong. Because of these things, Paul instructs the believers to pray to understand the meaning of the words the believers speak when the believers speak in tongues—so they help others and not just themselves.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: Tell a story about people who build something strong, like a house. What do you think makes a group of people strong? Discuss how you will translate the same idea in this passage. Pause this audio here.

In the second part of the passage, Paul gives a more personal example. People can speak or sing in tongues, and Paul can do both, so Paul talks about what it is like when Paul himself speaks in tongues. Paul prays and praises God in a language only God understands. Paul does this in Paul's spirit, the invisible part of Paul that is Paul's thoughts, feelings, and desires. Paul's mind—Paul's conscious thoughts—does not understand the words Paul is speaking. Paul's mind is unfruitful—his mind does not produce thoughts that Paul can speak, much like when a tree does not produce fruit. Paul's mind therefore does not produce anything to help others, but Paul's spirit benefits Paul himself. No one else can benefit from Paul speaking in tongues unless someone can explain the meaning of the words Paul speaks.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: Think about a time when you have had a strong emotion such as joy or sadness, but you could not explain why you felt this emotion. How might you translate the idea of the difference between doing something in the spirit and in the mind? Pause this audio here.

Paul says it is the same if Paul sings in Paul's spirit. Paul is not singing with Paul's conscious mind. Paul asks a question again—Paul asks what should Paul do about this? Paul then answers his own question. Paul should pray and sing with both Paul's spirit and Paul's mind thoughtfully. If someone prays or sings in tongues in that person's spirit, the Holy Spirit guides the person and the person prays in their spirit with the help of the Holy Spirit. However, Paul wants to pray and sing and understand what Paul is praying and singing so that other people around Paul can also understand. When Paul answers Paul's own question about himself, Paul is really giving the Corinthian church practical instructions for what *they* should also do in public gatherings. Paul wants everyone in the gathering to understand what people pray and sing so that the other believers can say "amen" and agree or join in with that person's praise and thanksgiving. This is how the church will be united all together. This is how the church will get spiritually strong together.

Paul shows Paul's approval for the gift of tongues by saying that Paul speaks in tongues more than all the other believers. However, just like in previous passages, Paul thinks about others more than Paul's own rights. Paul would rather speak 5 words that the other believers can understand and feel encouraged than 10,000 words that the believers cannot understand. Paul's message is clear, that speaking clearly and understanding other people helps everyone grow in their faith, or their trust and understanding of God.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the actions in the passage. As you do this, you might use drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul and the believers. Choose people or items to represent each character and example or imagined situation that Paul gives. As you retell the story of this passage, remember that Paul emphasizes the importance of speaking clearly and how speaking clearly builds unity and makes the church strong like a builder makes a strong building. Paul does this with practical examples using instruments and speaking in foreign languages. Paul talks about himself in public gatherings so Paul can give the believers in Corinth an example. Paul talks about how Paul will speak and sing

in tongues less and speak words that everyone can understand more! You might show how Paul stops speaking in tongues and speaks words that everyone can understand.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:6–19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Believers
- Person playing the flute or harp
- Military officer who plays the trumpet
- Soldiers listening to the trumpet sound
- And foreigners from other countries who speak a different language

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "Brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you unless I bring some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want the believers in Corinth to see how there is no value in speaking words that no one understands;" or
- "I hope by asking the believers this question, it will make them understand what spiritual gifts are most important for the benefit of everyone."

Paul says, "Even with lifeless objects that make a sound, such as a flute or a harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played if the notes do not differ? And if a trumpet does not make a clear call, who will get ready for battle? It is the same with you. Unless you speak in words that everyone can understand, your words are a waste—you will just be speaking to the air."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The believers might answer things like:

- "I can see how sounds or words without meaning to others are not helpful. I had not thought about it this way before. Paul's example really helps;" or
- "I realize how confusing it is when messages are not clear;" or
- "I understand that clear communication helps everyone to follow and be encouraged by what is said."

Paul says, "There are many languages in the world, all with meaning. But if I do not understand the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the person speaking and the person speaking is a foreigner to me. It is the same with you. You are eager to have spiritual gifts. Try to want gifts that build up the church. Because of these reasons, if you speak in tongues, you should pray and ask that God will allow you to understand the meaning of what you say."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I hope the believers can see that what they are doing when they pray in tongues is the same as the examples I have given;" or
- "I am glad the believers have such a strong desire for spiritual gifts, but they need to use them in the way God wants them to."

Also ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The believers might answer things like:

- "I am grateful that Paul has helped us realise that speaking in tongues is only good for us alone unless others understand what we are saying;" or
- "I am frustrated because I enjoy the gift of tongues and I like showing my spiritual gifts to everyone. I will pray and ask God to help me understand what I am saying when I am with other believers so I use this gift in a way that is good for everyone."

Next, Paul says, "If you praise God in a language that others do not understand, how can the others agree with you and say 'Amen'? The others cannot join in because they do not know what you are saying. You are giving thanks well enough, but it does not build up others."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" A person might answer things like:

- "I feel frustrated when I cannot understand what other people are saying;" or
- "I sometimes feel lonely when we all gather together, but I cannot understand everyone. I want to join in when other people worship, and I am glad Paul is showing us how to do that;" or
- "I appreciate that Paul wants us all to benefit from what people say."

Paul says, "If I pray in a language that others do not understand, my spirit is praying, but my mind is not helping other believers to understand. So, what should I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with understanding. I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with understanding. If you praise God with your spirit, how can someone else who does not understand say 'Amen' to your thanksgiving since they do not know what you are saying?"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want to make sure that both my spirit and my mind are worshipping God when I am with other people;" or
- "I want to show how important it is to pray and sing in ways that others can understand;" or
- "I want to make sure that others can share in my worship by understanding what I say. If everyone worships together, everyone will be more united."

Finally, Paul says, "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But I would rather speak 5 understandable words than 10,000 words in a tongue."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am grateful that I can speak to God in tongues, but I know it is not always helpful for other people;" or
- "I want the believers to focus on what builds up the church;" or
- "I know and love these people, and I want all of these people to grow when they gather together, so I want to say things that help them."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:6-19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul calls the believers **brothers**, or **brothers and sisters**. Paul is talking to both men and women. Use the same words or phrases for brothers and sisters that you have been using in previous passages.

Paul says if Paul visits the believers in Corinth and speaks in **tongues**, Paul's words will not help the believers. Someone who speaks "a tongue," or who speaks "in tongues," is a person who has a special gift from the Holy Spirit. When people speak in tongues like this, people normally do not themselves understand what they are saying. The Holy Spirit is making these people speak in a language that these people do not know themselves. In this unknown language, the people are praising God or speaking some truth about God. Use the same word or phrase for tongues as you have in previous passages. For more information on tongues refer to tongues in the Master Glossary.

Paul could help the believers if Paul came to the believers and spoke words of revelation, **knowledge**, prophecy, or **teaching**. God gives knowledge when he gives all kinds of information about God and how God's Spirit works in the world. When God teaches, God instructs people on the best way to behave. Use the same words for knowledge and teaching that you have used in previous passages.

Revelation is when God reveals or makes known something that people did not know before. Maybe people learn something new about God's nature, God's will, or specific truths that God wants people to understand. In this passage revelation and prophecy are very similar. Paul uses both words throughout this passage to mean a message from God. Revelation specifically can mean that the message God shares may be striking or unusual.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **revelation**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. For more information on revelation, refer to revelation in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

A **prophecy** can be an instruction from God about something that people need to do. It can be a message that tells about something that is going to happen in the future. Use the same word or phrase for prophecy as you have in previous passages. For more information on prophecy, refer to prophecy in the Master Glossary.

Paul compares speaking in tongues in gatherings to lifeless things that make sounds, like a **flute**, **harp**, or **trumpet**. A flute or pipe is a wind instrument that people make either from a natural reed or from ivory, bronze, silver, or gold. A flute is hollow and has holes drilled into the length of it. A person blows into a flute or pipe to make a sound. A harp is a large stringed instrument, usually a rectangle shape with a wooden frame and 4 to 8 strings. People pluck the strings to create sound. People make a trumpet or bugle of silver or bronze. A trumpet or bugle is a straight, metal tube, with one end flared into a cone shape. People blow into a trumpet or bugle to make a loud sound.

Stop here and look at a picture of a flute, harp, and trumpet as a group again, if needed. If you do not have these instruments in your culture, think of other similar instruments. What words or phrases will you use to describe these instruments?

The believers are eager or strongly desire **spiritual gifts**. Spiritual gifts are special abilities that the Holy Spirit gives a person. Use the same word or phrase for spiritual gifts as you used in previous passages. For more information, look up gift in the Master Glossary.

Paul says people speak many languages around the world that have meaning to people who speak those languages, but when we cannot understand those languages, it is like the speaker is a **foreigner** or barbarian to the person hearing those languages. A person is a foreigner in a country when they are in a country that is not where they were born. For more information on foreigner, look up foreigner in the Master Glossary.

Paul says that Paul prays, sings, and praises God in the **spirit**, but in gatherings, Paul should pray and sing and praise in the spirit but also in Paul's understanding in Paul's conscious mind. A person's spirit is the invisible part of a person—the person's thoughts, feelings, and desires. When the Bible uses the word spirit in this context, the focus is on the relationship that a person has with God. When we are praying, our spirit is talking with God. Use the same word or phrase for spirit as you used in previous passages. For more information on spirit, look up spirit of a person in the Master Glossary.

Paul says that if we do not use words people can understand, then people cannot agree with us or say "**amen**." Amen is the way that believers often say "I agree with you," or "May it happen in this way!"

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate **amen**. Look up amen in the Master Glossary for more information.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 14:6–19

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 14:20–25

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 14:20–25 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:20–25 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:20–25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this part of Paul's letter, Paul continues to talk to the believers in Corinth about the spiritual gifts of tongues and prophecy. In earlier passages, Paul compared the gifts of tongues and prophecy and described how these gifts could be useful or not useful for other believers when the believers gather to worship. Paul now talks again about the gifts of tongues and prophecy, and how these gifts affect unbelievers who hear them.

Paul starts by telling the believers to stop thinking like children. The way children think is often simple. Children do not always understand the effect of their actions. Paul probably wants the believers to not think about the gift of tongues simply as something that is exciting or impressive, or a way to show other believers how spiritual the believers are. Instead, the believers should be mature, thoughtful, and wise, and the believers should think about how to act in a way that is good for other people. Although Paul tells the believers to stop thinking like children when it comes to spiritual gifts, Paul wants the believers to be like infants, or babies, in what the believers know and understand about evil things. Evil things are thoughts and actions that are not good and that hurt other people. The believers should be innocent like babies and avoid doing or thinking evil or wrong things.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Can you think of a time when you acted in an immature way, like a child—when you did not consider how your actions might affect other people? If you had acted in a more thoughtful or responsible way, how would that have made things better? Pause this audio here.

Paul reminds the believers of something that the prophet Isaiah said. Paul says, "In the Law, it is written." The law is the Jewish scriptures or all the books of the Old Testament. The prophet Isaiah warned the people of Israel that the people were not listening to or obeying God and that God would judge the people because the people would not listen. Isaiah prophesied that God would send a sign that the Israelites had rejected God—foreigners who would speak in other languages would come and rule over the Israelites. But God's people did not listen even when foreigners spoke to them. When God's people heard these foreign tongues, it did not convince God's people of long ago to obey, so why should tongues convince unbelievers now? Isaiah did not mean that people would come and speak in tongues, a language only God understands. Isaiah meant people from foreign nations will speak in the languages of those peoples' nations, which the Israelites will not understand. In the same way, when believers hear a person speak in tongues, and these believers cannot understand the words they hear, the believer who cannot speak in tongues may feel like the others are judging them, like they do not belong to God or to the community of other believers. Just like people who spoke in foreign tongues did not make the Israelites start to obey God, believers in a church who speak in tongues will not make unbelievers start to believe and obey God. In fact, unbelievers may see tongues as a confusing action instead of hearing a clear message from God. Neither a believer nor an unbeliever who does not understand the tongues will feel closer to God. Instead, these people will feel more distant from God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Have you ever seen something that made you stop and think, "This is really special or different"? How did it make you feel? Now, imagine seeing something like that but not understanding what that thing meant. How would that change your reaction? Pause this audio here.

Once again, Paul compares the gift of tongues with prophecy. Paul says that the gift of tongues is a sign for unbelievers, not believers. When unbelievers hear a person speak in tongues, it might grab their attention because it is something unusual and supernatural. This could make the unbelievers realize that something extraordinary is happening. But because tongues may seem strange and confusing to the unbeliever, tongues are not necessarily a positive sign. Paul says prophecy, speaking God's message, is a sign for believers, not unbelievers. Prophecy is understandable and helps other believers.

Paul explains in more detail what Paul means. Paul shows what effect tongues or prophecy will have on unbelievers or outsiders—ordinary people who have not heard the message or good news of Jesus. If an unbeliever or outsider attends a gathering of believers, and the unbeliever hears people who speak in tongues without any explanation of what the words mean, the unbelievers will think the people are crazy or have lost control of themselves. This is confusing because Paul has just said that tongues are a sign for unbelievers, and now, Paul is saying that if unbelievers hear many people speak in tongues, those unbelievers will think the people are mad or crazy. Paul's message, though, is the same as it has been in the previous passages. Whilst speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift, and that gift can be a sign to an unbeliever of God's power or something supernatural, that gift is not a positive sign. In a public gathering, when no one gives an explanation for the words spoken, those words do not help the people. Instead, tongues can have the opposite effect and can drive an unbeliever away from God.

Paul shows how prophecy can help an unbeliever or ordinary person who attends a gathering of believers. This may also seem confusing at first because Paul has just said that prophecy is a sign for believers, not for unbelievers, and Paul now explains how it can be good for unbelievers. Paul says prophecy is a sign for believers because the person who gives the prophecy gives a message from God in a clear, understandable way. Prophecy strengthens, encourages, and comforts believers, and helps them grow. Prophecy builds up those who already follow Jesus, because prophecy helps believers know God's will. Even though Paul says prophecy is for believers, Paul goes on to show that prophecy can also have a powerful, positive effect on unbelievers when they hear that prophecy.

When an unbeliever or outsider hears prophecy, the words of the prophecy expose the secrets of that person's heart. The secrets of a person's heart are the thoughts and actions a person has or has done that other people do not know about. Paul says the unbelievers or outsiders will recognize their own sins or wrong actions. As a result, the unbeliever is persuaded by the messages from everyone. The unbeliever becomes aware that God is really with them. The unbelievers or outsiders will kneel down and lower their face to the floor in respect and worship to God. The unbelievers or outsiders will believe that God is really among the believers.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:20–25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul tells the believers to be mature in the way the believers think, especially about the believers' spiritual gifts. But the believers should be like infants or babies in the believers' knowledge of things that are evil or wrong.

In the second part: Paul quotes from the prophet Isaiah, who warned the people of Israel that foreign invaders would speak to the Israelites in unfamiliar languages as a sign of God's judgement because they did not listen to God. God's people were not convinced to obey God when they heard foreign tongues. In the same way, the gift of tongues will not convince unbelievers in Corinth.

In the third part: Paul explains how tongues and prophecy affect both believers and unbelievers. Tongues can make a person feel confused and lead unbelievers away from God. But if an unbeliever hears God's message, through prophecy, that unbeliever will know God's truth and understand that God knows all of that person's thoughts and actions. This will convince an unbeliever to declare that God is really with them.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Believers
- Isaiah
- People of Israel
- People from foreign nations
- Unbelievers and outsiders who might come to a church gathering
- And God

Paul responds to a situation in which the believers in Corinth did not understand how to use their spiritual gifts, especially tongues. Paul uses Paul's letter to correct this behavior. Paul gives the believers clear instructions and quotes from scripture to help make Paul's message clear. Paul asks the believers to imagine situations so that they can understand what Paul is instructing the believers to do. Paul teaches the believers

to use the believers' gifts especially for the good of other people, especially in public gatherings. The believers need to be aware of how the believers' actions affect both believers and unbelievers.

In the first part of the passage, Paul wants to correct the way the believers think. Paul gives clear instructions, but Paul does this with love and friendship when Paul calls the believers brothers and sisters. Paul instructs the believers to stop thinking like children. Children often think only about what seems fun or exciting and do not consider the effect of their actions. In the same way, the believers in Corinth focused too much on spiritual gifts that the believers thought made them look good, like tongues, without thinking about how these gifts could affect other people. Paul tells the believers to be wise and thoughtful, especially when the believers use their spiritual gifts in public. Then Paul makes a contrast. Paul says that believers should be "infants in evil." Paul means the believers should stay innocent and avoid wrong or harmful thoughts and actions, just like babies are innocent or unaware of wrongdoing. Paul uses two different words for children and babies. Children refers to young children who are old enough for people to teach or discipline them. Paul uses the word children to describe someone who is still immature in the way that person thinks or understands things. Infants or babies refers to new-born or very young babies, who are still helpless or innocent. Infants or babies are still too young to understand things. Paul uses the word infant to show that the believers should be innocent and free from the knowledge or experience of evil.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe someone who is mature in their thinking, and someone who behaves like a child. What phrases or words do you have in your culture to describe someone who is "mature" in their thinking? Talk about words or phrases that show that someone is not wise, or behaves like a child. Pause this audio here.

In the second part of the passage, Paul quotes from the prophet Isaiah. When Paul says, "In the Law it is written," Paul refers to the whole of the Jewish Scriptures, or all the books of the Old Testament. Paul talks about a time when God used people from foreign nations who spoke in foreign languages to warn the people of Israel that God would judge the Israelites. In Isaiah's time, the people of Israel were ignoring God's messages, so God allowed foreign nations to invade the people of Israel. This was a sign that God was punishing, or judging, the people of Israel for disobeying God. Even then, the Israelites would not listen to the Lord God. Paul says that the foreigners will speak from their lips, or from their mouths, their own languages from their own countries. Paul is not saying that these foreigners have the gift of tongues. Paul is saying that just like the Israelites could not understand these foreigners, people cannot understand when the believers speak in tongues.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: What stories or sayings do you have in your culture that warn people about what will happen to them if they disobey God or their leaders? Pause this audio here.

Paul uses this quote from Isaiah to help the believers realize that when people speak in tongues, and other people cannot understand the words, it is like a negative sign that makes other people feel far away from God and confused, similar to how the Israelites felt far away from God in the past. This is the opposite of prophecy, which makes people feel that God is close and that God speaks directly to them. So, when the believers speak in tongues and do not explain what they mean, the believers are accidentally making other people feel judged and separated from God instead of closer to God and to each other.

Next, Paul makes a statement that may seem confusing at first. Paul says that tongues are a sign for unbelievers, not believers. A sign is something unusual that happens for a special reason. Signs help people to believe in God. Tongues may be a sign for unbelievers as tongues seem unusual and supernatural. Tongues can show God's power and may grab the attention of an unbeliever. However, Paul will go on to show that although tongues may be a sign, tongues are not always a positive sign.

It may seem confusing when Paul says that prophecy is a sign for believers and not a sign for unbelievers. When believers use the gift of prophecy, these believers speak in a way that everyone can understand. Prophecy is meant to help those who already believe in God to grow in their faith. Prophecy shows the believers what God wants to say, and these words encourage the believers and help to correct the believers' thoughts and behaviors. Believers understand and benefit from prophecy because the believers already have a relationship with God, and when the believers hear prophecy, the believers hear God's messages. Unbelievers might not understand prophecy in the same way because unbelievers do not yet have a personal relationship with God. But again, Paul will go on to show how prophecy also benefits unbelievers.

Paul asks his audience to imagine a situation in which unbelievers or outsiders join the gathering of believers and hear many people speak in tongues or prophesy. Paul says these things to show how prophecy is a more valuable gift in public. If the unbelievers or outsiders hear "everyone speaking in tongues," with no explanation, it will cause the unbelievers or outsiders to think that the believers are not in control of themselves. Paul does not mean every person at the gathering is speaking in tongues; Paul means many people who may also speak over each other cause the gathering to seem chaotic and confusing to an unbeliever or outsider. Paul asks the believers a question Paul does not expect the believers to answer. Paul asks, in this imagined situation, "Would not the unbelievers and outsiders think you are out of your minds, or not in control of yourselves?" Paul's tone here is urgent. Paul does not want unbelievers and outsiders to run away from God because what these people see or hear is strange and confusing. Paul instead wants unbelievers and outsiders to find faith in God.

Paul asks Paul's audience to imagine a different situation where an unbeliever or outsider joins a gathering "while everyone is prophesying." Paul uses different words for unbeliever and outsider. An outsider probably refers to a person who is a believer, but is not able to understand or explain the meaning of tongues. An unbeliever is a person who does not follow Jesus. Paul was likely thinking about the people in Corinth who worshipped other gods or had no religion at all.

Stop here and discuss the following questions as a group: How will you translate the difference between "unbeliever" and "outsider" in your own language? How do people in your culture describe someone who does not follow a faith or religion and someone who is part of the group but does not fully understand or participate in everything? Pause this audio here.

Maybe not every person in the church gathering prophesies, but many people might speak messages from God. An unbeliever or outsider may come to this gathering, hear prophecy, and become aware of their own wrongdoing, or be convicted. This will lead an unbeliever to recognise that God is real and that they need to change how they think and act. The prophecy reveals the truth in the unbeliever's heart, so the prophecy judges the unbeliever. Because the unbeliever or outsider will know God's truth and understand that God knows all their thoughts and actions, the unbeliever or outsider will feel sorry for their sin or wrong doings and ask God to forgive them. Then the unbelievers or outsiders will kneel down with their face to the floor in respect and worship to God. The unbeliever or outsider will recognise that God is truly present with the believers.

Paul wants the believers in Corinth to be aware of how they are affecting each other when they gather together. Paul also wants the believers to consider the effect of their behaviour on unbelievers or outsiders, ordinary people who have not heard the message or good news of Jesus. Neither believers nor unbelievers will benefit from tongues with no explanation. Tongues without explanation can make both believers and unbelievers feel more distant from God. Prophecy, however, builds up, encourages, and reveals God's truth to both believers and unbelievers. When the believers in Corinth gather together, the believers should always be focused on helping each other grow in their faith.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the actions in the passage. As you do this, you might use drawings, objects, or even people to represent the characters. Imagine Paul speaking to the Corinthian believers and encouraging the believers to stop acting like children and to be thoughtful about how they use their gifts. Perhaps begin by acting immature like children, then follow Paul's instructions and begin to act like mature adults. Then picture a church gathering where people are speaking in tongues, and unbelievers come in, confused and unsure of what is happening. Now, imagine a different gathering where people are prophesying, and those same unbelievers hear the truth and believe in God.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:20–25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Believers
- Isaiah
- People of Israel
- People from foreign nations
- Unbelievers and outsiders who might come to a church gathering
- And God

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. Be innocent when it comes to evil, but in your understanding, be mature."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want the believers in Corinth to grow in wisdom, especially when it comes to how they use spiritual gifts;" or
- "I am frustrated that the believers are not thinking about how what the believers do and say affects other people;" or
- "I need to correct the believers' thinking and help them to stay away from things that are harmful or not good."

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "I feel insulted that Paul is comparing us to children!" or
- "I am thankful that Paul helps to correct us and gives us clear instructions."

Paul says, "In the Law, it is written, 'With other tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then, they will not listen to me, says the Lord.'"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want the Corinthians to understand that speaking in tongues without explanation makes people feel distant from God;" or
- "I want to remind the believers that tongues can act as a sign, like it did for the people of Israel."

Paul says, "Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am trying to help the Corinthians understand that tongues are not meant to impress other believers;" or
- "I want the believers to understand the difference between tongues and prophecy, so that the believers focus on what strengthens other people."

Now ask the person playing a believer: "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "Why is Paul saying tongues are not for us? I thought tongues showed God's power in our gatherings;" or
- "I am beginning to think that I have not understood how to use my spiritual gifts wisely."

Paul asks, "So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers come in, will those outsiders or unbelievers not say that you are out of your minds?"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want the believers to see how chaotic and confusing it would be for someone who does not understand what is going on;" or
- "I want unbelievers to get to know God. If the believers keep speaking in tongues, the believers will drive the unbelievers away from God!" or
- "I feel frustrated and sad with the believers because they use their spiritual gifts to show off instead of for helping unbelievers or other people."

Now ask the person playing a believer, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I never thought about how this looks to outsiders. Maybe we are focusing too much on showing off our gifts;" or
- "I know how confused I feel when I do not understand something someone is saying. I do not want the unbelievers to feel confused as well."

Now ask the person playing an unbeliever, "What are you feeling or thinking when you walk into a gathering where everyone is speaking in tongues?" The person might answer things like:

- "I feel really uncomfortable, like I do not belong, or maybe even scared that something strange is happening here;" or
- "I do not want to come back here. Everyone here is crazy!"

Paul says, "But if many people prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, that person is convicted by all, that person is called to account by all. As the secrets of that person's heart are disclosed, that person will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, 'God is really among you!'"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing a believer, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I see now that prophecy has the power to change people's lives by showing those people what God is really saying;" or
- "I want to ask God for the gift of prophecy so that I can encourage other believers and help unbelievers find faith in God."

Now ask the person playing an unbeliever, "What are you feeling or thinking when you hear prophecy?" The person might answer things like:

- "I feel like God knows me. Now I want to know more about God;" or
- "I am so glad I came to see what this gathering was all about. I understand my wrong doings now and I want to change to live as God wants me to."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:20-25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul tells the believers to stop thinking like **children** but to be **infants** in evil. The Greek words for children and infants are different in this passage. Infants refers to babies rather than children who have some understanding of things. Babies are completely innocent with no understanding yet. **Evil** is when a person willingly does bad things that hurt other people. When people stop obeying God, they begin to do evil actions.

Stop here and discuss which words or phrases you will use for **children** and **infants**. How will you show that children and infants are different? Use the same word or phrase for **evil** as you have in previous passages. For more information about evil, look up evil in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Paul quotes from the prophet Isaiah. Paul says, "In the **Law** it is written." Sometimes in the Bible, the Law can mean the set of instructions God gave to Moses for the people of Israel. However, here the Law means all of the Jewish Scripture, which is the part of the Bible that we now call the Old Testament. Use the same word or phrase for Law as you have in previous passages. For more information on Law, refer to the Master Glossary.

The **Lord** said the people of Israel would not listen to the Lord, despite Isaiah's warning. Lord refers to God himself in this passage, but most translations use the same word for Lord both when it refers to Jesus as master and when it refers to God the Father. For more information about Lord, refer to Lord in the Master Glossary.

Isaiah spoke about people of "strange tongues" through the lips of **foreigners**. Lips of foreigners means the words that people spoke from other countries or cultures. A person is a foreigner in a country when they are in a country that is not where they were born. Use the same word or phrase for foreigner as you have in previous passages. For more information on foreigners, look up foreigner in the Master Glossary.

Strange tongues, here, likely refers to the different or foreign language the people from other countries speak in their nations. It does not mean the gift of tongues.

Stop here and discuss how you can make it clear that strange tongues mean foreign languages instead of the gift of tongues. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the gift of tongues is a **sign** for unbelievers and not believers, and prophecy is a sign for believers but not unbelievers. A sign is something unusual that is happening for a special reason. God can give a sign to tell people that something God tells them is true. Use the same word or phrase for sign as you used in previous passages. For more information about signs, refer to sign in the Master Glossary.

Paul talks about the gifts of **tongues** and **prophecy** in this passage. A person who speaks "a tongue," or who speaks "in tongues," means a person who has a special gift from the Holy Spirit. When people speak in tongues like this, they normally do not themselves understand what they are saying. The Holy Spirit is making these people speak in a language that these people do not know themselves. In this unknown language, the people are praising God or speaking some truth about God. A prophecy can be an instruction from God about something that needs to be done. It can be a message that tells about something that is going to happen in the future. Use the same word or phrase for tongues and prophecy as you have in previous passages. For more information on tongues and prophecy, refer to tongues and prophecy in the Master Glossary.

Paul shows the believers what would happen if the whole **church** came together and many people spoke in tongues or gave prophecy. In the Bible the word church is never used to mean a building. Instead, the word church means a community of people who believe in Jesus. Use the same word or phrase for church as you used in previous passages. For more information about church, refer to church in the Master Glossary.

When a person hears prophecy, the person will know that God knows the secrets of that person's heart—their thoughts and actions that no one else knows. That person will be **convicted by all**. A person will become **deeply aware of their sin** or wrongdoing.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate the idea if being "convicted by all," or "deeply aware of sin." The passage does not use the word sin, but you may want to use this word here. For more information about sin, refer to sin in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

When a person **worships** God, that person gives honor to God. A person gives thanks, praises, and respect to God. Use the same word or phrase for worship as you used in previous passages. For more information about worship, refer to worship in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 14:20–25

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 14:26–33

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 14:26–33 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:26–33 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:26–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In previous parts of Paul's letter, Paul helped the believers understand how the gifts of tongues and prophecy can affect other people who hear them. Paul now sums up what Paul has said and gives specific instructions for how the believers should gather to worship in a peaceful and orderly way. The believers had been meeting in ways that were often confusing, especially when it came to spiritual gifts like speaking in tongues and prophecy. Paul tells the believers when they gather to worship God, it should not be confusing and chaotic, because God himself loves peace and order.

Paul starts by asking a question Paul does not expect the believers to answer. Paul asks, "What then?" Paul is asking, what should the next steps be when the believers gather to worship? Paul knows that when the believers gather, many of the believers will have something important they want to share with the other believers. Each of the believers may have a spiritual gift that they want to use or show. Paul lists some of the gifts the Holy Spirit gives to a person. These are not all the possible gifts the Holy Spirit can give. Paul says that some believers may want to share a hymn or a psalm. A hymn or a psalm is a song of praise to God. Some of the believers may want to teach or explain something about God. Other believers may have a revelation, or a special message from God. Some believers may want to speak in tongues and others may have the gift of being able to explain the meaning of the tongues. Paul says that whatever the believers share in the gatherings must build up the other believers and not cause people to feel confused.

Paul instructs the believers to limit how many people can speak in tongues during the believers' gathering. Paul says that only two or three believers should speak in tongues. The believers who speak in tongues should take it in turns to speak. If a believer wants to speak in tongues, either the believer who wants to speak, or another believer who listens, must explain the meaning. If no one can explain the meaning, the believer who wants to speak in tongues should stay quiet and talk to himself and God. Some people think that when Paul says this, Paul means the believer should wait until the believer is in private, after the gathering, and then speak in tongues to God. Other people think Paul is saying the believer should stay quiet during the gathering and speak to God in their mind so that no one else can hear what they speak. It is not clear which one of these Paul means, but Paul's purpose is to make sure that no one speaks in tongues out loud without an explanation and causes confusion for the other believers.

Next, Paul talks about prophecy. Paul has similar instructions for how believers should use their gifts of prophecy. Paul says that no more than two or three people should prophesy. Some translations say only two or three prophets should speak. A prophet can sometimes refer to a particular group of people whose job in the church was to bring messages from God. People would sometimes ask prophets what to do so the prophets could tell the people what God says. Paul is not referring to these prophets. Paul means anyone in the gathering with the gift of prophecy. Paul says that two or three believers should prophesy, and the other believers should listen carefully. Paul wants the other believers to check the messages they hear and decide if the messages truly come from God. If a believer feels like God has given that believer a message or prophecy to share while another person is prophesying, the person prophesying should stop and let the other believer speak. Often, if a person was sharing a message from God, that person would stand to speak. Paul is saying that God may choose to give a message to a believer who is sitting down and listening. Just like Paul's instructions about tongues, Paul wants the believers to take turns when they prophesy and not all speak at once. Paul wants the gatherings to stay peaceful, so all the believers can hear God's messages, learn from those messages, and be encouraged.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: In your church or gathering, how do you make sure things stay orderly during worship or teaching? What are some of the things you do that help everyone take turns and listen carefully? Why do you think this is important for the whole group? Pause this audio here.

Paul does not want the believers' gatherings to be chaotic with everyone speaking at the same time. Paul says that those who prophesy should have self-control. Although God, through the Holy Spirit, is giving God's message to the believers who prophesy, the believers are still in control of when they speak. The Holy Spirit does not take control of a person. Paul says the spirit of the prophets, or their inner thoughts and emotions, are in control of the prophets. Even if the believer feels very excited about what they want to share, that believer should wait for that believer's turn and not cause disorder.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: When you have been in groups where everyone spoke at the same time, what was it like? How hard was it to hear and understand what everyone was saying? How did it make you feel? Pause this audio here.

Paul ends this part of the passage by reminding the believers God's nature. God is a God of peace, not chaos and disorder. The way the believers gather to worship should reflect God's character and nature and show who God is. God wants peace, respect, and order in gatherings, not confusion. Peace here does not mean quietness; peace means harmony within the group. If the believers follow Paul's instructions, their meetings will be full of peace, and everyone will grow in their faith. All gatherings of saints, or God's people, should reflect God's character in this way.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:26–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four parts.

In the first part: Paul talks about how believers should use their gifts when they gather together. Paul lists some of the different spiritual gifts and explains that the believers should use these gifts in an orderly way to encourage other believers.

In the second part: Paul gives specific instructions about speaking in tongues.

In the third part: Paul gives specific instructions about prophesying.

In the fourth part: Paul explains that God is not a God of confusion, but a God of peace. This means that everything the believers do in the church gatherings should reflect God's character.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God
- Believers
- People who speak in tongues
- And people who prophesy

In the first part of this passage, Paul asks a question Paul does not expect the believers to answer: "What then, brothers?" This question brings a shift in focus from helping the believers understand why the believers' spiritual gifts should be used in certain ways, to now a practical application of how believers should organize a worship gathering. Paul wants to correct the behaviour of the believers when the believers gather, because the believers' gatherings were chaotic. The believers all spoke at the same time and did not listen to each other. The believers used their spiritual gifts to show off instead of for the benefit of everyone. Paul's instructions are to help the believers to gather in a way that is peaceful and orderly and will help build everyone up.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: Why do you think Paul uses questions Paul does not expect the believers to answer instead of giving direct instructions? How does this help Paul to make Paul's point? How will you translate this to change the focus to how believers should organize a worship gathering? Pause this audio here.

Paul understands that when the believers gather to worship, each believer might want to share something with the other believers. Some believers may sing a hymn or psalm—a song of praise to God. Some believers may have a teaching—a lesson about God they want to share. Other believers may speak in tongues—a special language from God—and some may give a revelation or prophesy. In this passage revelation and prophecy are very similar. Paul uses both words throughout this passage to mean a message from God. Revelation specifically can mean that the message God shares may be striking or unusual. Paul is saying that all these things are important, but everything should be done in a way that helps everyone learn and grow. Paul does not list the

spiritual gifts in any specific order. Paul is not saying that this is the order people should do things in church, or that any of the gifts are more important than other gifts.

In the second part of this passage, Paul gives clear and specific instructions for how the believers should use the gift of tongues in public gatherings. Paul tells the believers to limit how many people speak in tongues to no more than three. Paul may mean that no more than three believers should speak in tongues throughout the whole time the believers are gathered, or Paul may mean that no more than three believers should speak in tongues one after the other. Either way, Paul's focus is to make it clear that the believers should take turns to speak and should only speak in tongues if someone can bring an explanation. Paul goes further and says if none of the believers who are gathered can explain the tongues, the believer who wants to speak in tongues should stay silent during the gathering. This does not mean the believer is not allowed to speak in tongues at all. Instead, Paul says, the believer should "speak to himself and to God." The believer can still speak in tongues privately, but this person's speech is not helpful to share publicly without explanation as it causes confusion for the rest of the group. The purpose of spiritual gifts is to build up the church, and if people do not understand what they see or hear, they cannot benefit from it.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: Paul uses direct language in order to make it clear how the Corinthian believers should organize their gatherings. In your own life, when have you found it helpful to give very specific instructions, like Paul does here, so that everyone will understand how to do something? Pause this audio here.

In the third part of this passage, Paul gives instructions about prophecy in the same way Paul gives instructions about tongues. Paul again says the believers should limit how many believers can prophesy. Paul says that other believers must think carefully about the message they hear and decide if it is a good or bad message. Finally, again, Paul tells the believers who are prophesying to be silent in certain circumstances.

Paul says that no more than three people should prophesy. It is not clear if Paul means no more than three people throughout the whole gathering or no more than three people one after another at any one time. Paul says that up to two or three prophets should speak, but Paul also gives further instructions. Paul wants the believers to "weigh carefully" what is said. This is different to tongues, where someone should interpret what the person says. Prophecy requires people to think carefully about what they hear. The phrase "weigh up what they are hearing" means the other believers need to listen carefully and judge whether the prophecy agrees with God's truth—what the scriptures teach. Believers should not simply accept whatever is said as true. Different people might claim to speak on behalf of God, but these people are not always being truthful. Paul advises believers to listen to prophecy with wisdom and decide whether the message builds up and encourages and comforts the other believers. It is the responsibility of all the believers to decide what is true and right.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: How do you decide what is true when you hear information and opinions in everyday life? Can you think of a time when you had to "weigh carefully" what someone said to make sure it aligned with your values or beliefs? Pay attention to the way you describe how you decide what information is true and good. Pause this audio here.

Paul finishes Paul's instructions about how to use the gift of prophecy by saying that if a believer receives a message from God while another believer is already sharing a prophecy, or message from God, the first believer, or the believer who is speaking, should stop and let the other believer speak. The believers should take turns when they share prophecies so that all the believers can learn and be encouraged.

In the last part of this passage Paul shows the believers that Paul's instructions are based on God's own character. Paul says that God is not a God of confusion, but of peace. When the believers gather to worship, the believers' gatherings should reflect this same order and peace. For example, people who prophesy should have self-control and take turns to speak, because peace means living in harmony with one another. Just as God's nature is one of harmony and not chaos, so too should the gatherings be places where everyone does things in an orderly way. The goal of these gatherings is to build up all of the believers. The gatherings should not be a place for individual believers to use their spiritual gifts for their own benefit. People should not be confused, and the worship time should not be chaotic. The believers should become stronger spiritually. When the believers follow Paul's instructions, the believers' gatherings will show God's peace, or harmony and order.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: Think about situations where you feel like there is chaos and people are confused because everyone is trying to do things the way they want to. Then think about

a situation where you feel like everyone is working together in a good way and to accomplish the same thing. How do you describe these two situations? How could you explain this idea of order and harmony in your own language or cultural setting? How will you translate the idea that Paul wants the believers' gatherings to show God's character? Pause this audio here.

Some translations include a final sentence here which some people think conclude Paul's instructions to the believers about how to behave when the believers gather together. Church gatherings should be orderly and peaceful, and this is, or should be, the same in all gatherings of God's people, not just for the believers in Corinth. Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Corinthians are "saints" in God's church, or holy people who God has set apart as special for God. Other translations do not include this sentence here. Some people think this sentence starts the next part of Paul's letter where Paul begins to talk about how women should behave when all the believers gather.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. Use drawings, objects, or people to show the different gifts in the church: One person can sing a hymn or psalm, another person can give a teaching, another person can speak in tongues, and another person can share a prophecy. Make sure all of these people take turns, just like Paul describes, so the gathering stays peaceful. Then, show what it looks like if everyone tries to speak at the same time—how confusing and noisy it would be! After that, show how taking turns makes it easier for everyone to listen and learn.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:26–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God
- Believers
- People who speak in tongues
- And people who prophesy

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done to build up."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want this church to be a strong church. I will keep making it clear that the believers should always focus on building up each other;" or
- "I understand that everyone has spiritual gifts they want to share. I want to help all of the believers use these gifts in the best way."

Paul says, "If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be only two, or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let that person keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing a believer, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am happy that people will take turns to speak in tongues. I feel very confused when everyone speaks at once;" or
- "I will feel more included in the worship if I can understand and hear what people are saying when they speak in tongues. I am glad people will not just be shouting over each other anymore;" or
- "I am worried I will not get a turn if Paul says we have to limit how many people can speak;" or
- "It is challenging to think that I might need to stay silent sometimes. I am not used to doing that."

Paul says, "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to another person sitting there, let the first person be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all people may learn and all people be encouraged."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I need to listen carefully and decide whether the prophecy aligns with God's truth," or
- "I think our gatherings are going to be much more helpful and encouraging if we follow what Paul is telling us to do."

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want to make sure everyone has the opportunity to speak and learn, but in a peaceful and respectful way;" or
- "This will help the believers grow and be more united."

Paul says, "And the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "I feel comforted to know that God brings peace, not disorder;" or
- "I realize how important it is for our worship to reflect God's character of peace and order;" or
- "I can see that Paul's instructions are to help us be more like God."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:26–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul calls the believers **brothers**, or **brothers and sisters**. Use the same word or phrase for brothers, or brothers and sisters, as you have used in previous passages.

Paul understands that when the believers gather together, all of the believers have different spiritual gifts they might want to share, such as a **hymn** or a psalm. A hymn is a song of praise to God. The followers of Jesus sang hymns when they came together.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **hymn**. For more information on hymns, look up hymn in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Other believers may have a **revelation** they want to share. Revelation is when God reveals or makes known something that was previously hidden or unknown. Revelation can include information about God's nature, God's will, or specific truths that God wants people to understand. In this passage, revelation and prophecy are very similar. Paul uses both words throughout this passage to mean a message from God. Revelation specifically can mean that the message God shares may be striking or unusual. Use the same word or phrase for revelation as you used in previous passages. For more information about revelation, refer to revelation in the Master Glossary.

Some believers may want to speak in **tongues**. The gift of tongues is when the Holy Spirit makes a person speak in an unknown language that only God understands. In this unknown language, the people praise God or speak some truth about God. Use the same word or phrase for tongues as you have in previous passages. For more information on tongues, refer to tongues in the Master Glossary.

Paul says if no one can explain the meaning of the tongues, then a person who wants to speak in tongues should stay silent in **church** and speak to himself and to God. Use the same word or phrase for church as you used in previous passages. For more information about church, refer to church in the Master Glossary.

Paul says the believers should limit how many people speak in tongues or share **prophecy** when they gather. Some translations use the word prophets here. These are not the same as the prophets of the Old Testament. In the New Testament, Paul teaches us that the Holy Spirit gives some people the ability to speak prophecies. Through the Holy Spirit, God can give these believers some special knowledge or insight that is for the good of the church. Paul calls this the gift of prophecy. Not every believer may have this gift, because the Holy Spirit gives different gifts to different people. Use the same word or phrase for prophecy as you have in previous passages. For more information about prophecy, refer to prophecy in the Master Glossary.

When the Holy Spirit gives a person the gift of prophecy, the **spirit** of the person who prophesies is still in control of the person. Spirit refers to a person's spirit which is the invisible part of a person—the person's thoughts, feelings, and desires. Use the same word or phrase for spirit as you have in previous passages. For more information about spirit, refer to spirit in the Master Glossary.

Paul reminds the believers of why the believers should gather in a peaceful and orderly way. Paul says God is not a God of confusion, but of **peace**. Peace means to be completely well and live in harmony. Use the same word or phrase for peace as you have in previous passages. For more information about peace, refer to peace in the Master Glossary.

Paul says that all the **saints** in all the churches should behave in the same way as Paul has instructed the believers in Corinth. Saints means the holy people. These are people who belong to God because they are believers or followers of Jesus. Use the same word or phrase for saints as you have in previous passages. For more information about saints, refer to saints in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 14:26–33

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (16238846 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
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1 Corinthians 14:34-40

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 14:34–40 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:34–40 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:34–40 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In previous passages, Paul gives clear instructions to the believers about how the believers should behave when the believers gather together. Paul says that when the people in the church gather, the people should have good order and not cause confusion. The believers should behave in a way that reflects God's own character. In this passage, Paul gives further instructions, specifically about women in the church. Paul finishes by summarizing again the purpose of the instructions Paul has given the believers. Paul says that the believers should strongly desire spiritual gifts, but that everything the believers do when the believers gather should build up the church and benefit everyone.

Paul begins this passage with instructions on how women should behave in church. Paul says that women should stay silent in church. Women are not allowed to speak. Some people think Paul was only giving instructions for the specific church in Corinth, where things were chaotic and disorderly. In that case, Paul may have been asking women to stay silent because the women were interrupting or causing disorder. In earlier parts of Paul's letter to the believers in Corinth, we see that Paul allows women to pray and prophesy in public. So, it is possible that Paul was talking about a specific problem in this particular church. Other people think Paul means women should not speak or lead in any churches at all. We do not know exactly what Paul means here, but we know that Paul's focus is to make sure there is harmony and order in the church.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What roles do women have in your church or community? What kinds of behaviors might be embarrassing or shameful for women to do? Pause this audio here.

Paul says women should be submissive, which means women should show respect and obey the people in authority over the women. Paul mentions that this is "what the law says," but different people have different ideas about what Paul means when Paul says "law." Some people think Paul is referring to scripture, even though there is nothing specific in the Old Testament which says that women should not speak when people are gathered together. Other people think Paul is talking about cultural laws and customs of that time, where people often expected women to be silent in public.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Describe someone you know who is humble and who respects everyone. How does this person act? How do other people respond to this person or think about this person? Pause this audio here.

In the church in Corinth, people were becoming chaotic when the people gathered together, and some women may have been interrupting by asking questions while other people were speaking or teaching. Paul says if women want to learn, they should ask their husbands questions at home to avoid causing disruption. Speaking or interrupting in this way would bring shame or embarrassment on a woman. Remember that Paul has just given the Corinthian church rules for worshipping God in an orderly way and taking turns to speak. Paul may be saying this to the women because Paul wants people to act in an orderly and peaceful way specifically in the church in Corinth. Or again, it may be that in the culture at the time it was not appropriate for women to question teaching or prophecy in public.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Paul talks a lot about keeping order in the church gatherings. Describe what it looks like to work in an orderly and respectful way in different areas of your life, like at work, school, or in your family. Why is it important to have order and respect in these areas? Pause this audio here.

Paul challenges the believers' attitudes by asking a question Paul does not expect the believers to answer. Paul's question is mocking. Paul wants to remind the believers that God's Word did not start with the believers. The Corinthians were not the first people to hear God's message, and it was not the Corinthians who shared God's message with other people. God gave God's message to many other believers. The believers in Corinth are not the only ones who have heard God's message. The believers in Corinth are not more important or different than other believers in their knowledge or spiritual gifts. When the believers in Corinth worship in their own way, and not in the way Paul says all the churches should worship, the believers in Corinth are being arrogant. Paul wants the believers to realize that there are many other churches, and all the churches should reflect God's character in the way the churches behave.

Paul continues by saying that anyone who thinks they are a prophet, or thinks they have other spiritual gifts, should acknowledge or accept that Paul's instructions come from the Lord Jesus. A prophet in this context is anyone with the gift of prophecy. Those who reject Paul's authority and teaching are rejecting Jesus's command. Paul says that the things Paul teaches come from the Lord. If anyone wants to ignore Paul's teaching, others will also ignore that person. There are different ideas again here about what Paul means when Paul says, "If anyone does not recognize this, others will not recognize him." Some people think Paul is warning the believers that God will reject anyone who ignores Paul's teaching. Other people think Paul is saying that other believers should discipline or send a person away from the community of believers if that person refuses to follow Paul's instructions.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do people in your community respond when someone refuses to follow important guidelines or rules? What effect does it have on the community? Pause this audio here.

Paul makes one big statement about everything Paul has said about how the believers should act when they gather together. Paul says the believers should strongly desire the gift of prophecy because it helps to build up the church and make the church stronger. Paul also says that tongues should be allowed in church, if someone can explain the meaning. The believers should always show respect, care, and order, because this is the way God acts too.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:34–40 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four parts.

In the first part: Paul tells women to remain silent in church and obey people in authority, as the law says. If women have questions, the women should ask their husbands at home. A woman brings shame on herself if she speaks and causes disorder in church.

In the second part: Paul challenges the believers' arrogant attitudes. Paul asks the Corinthian believers if God's Word started with them or if the believers are the only people who have heard it.

In the third part: Paul gives a strong warning. Paul says that anyone who thinks they are a prophet, or thinks they have spiritual gifts, must recognize or not ignore that Paul's teaching comes from the Lord Jesus. If anyone ignores this teaching, others will ignore them and not acknowledge them.

In the fourth part: Paul encourages the believers to strongly desire the gift of prophecy and to allow speaking in tongues, if they do it in an orderly way. Paul emphasizes the importance of building up the church and worshiping in an orderly way.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Women in the church
- Husbands of women in the church
- Believers
- Prophets or people with spiritual gifts
- And Jesus

Paul gives instructions to the church in Corinth to make sure the believers gather in an orderly and respectful way. Paul specifically addresses women in the church. This is likely because there was disorder during the believers' gatherings. Paul mocks the believers and asks questions that do not require an answer to challenge the believers' attitudes, reminding the believers that they are not the only ones who have received God's Word. Paul then strongly warns the believers about the importance of recognizing that Paul's teachings are from the Lord, Jesus. Paul is concerned with the believer's lack of respect and obedience within the church community. Paul does not want the believers to be arrogant, but instead the believers should be respectful and humble.

In the first part of the passage, Paul speaks about how women should behave in church. When Paul refers to women here, Paul means women of all ages and circumstances—unmarried, married, or widowed. Paul is not only talking to the wives. Paul says, "Women should remain silent in the churches." Paul is both saying that women should not speak, and also that women should have a general attitude of quietness and obedience. The women should not question, in public, the prophecy and teaching people share. In the original language, the word for speak can mean talking in general, but it can also refer to speaking out in a disruptive way, like interrupting or causing disorder. Some people think Paul is saying women should never speak at all in church. Other people think instead that Paul means women should not speak in a way that causes confusion or disrupts the service.

Paul says that women must submit to leaders, just as the law says women must do. This means women should be obedient and accept the authority and leadership of someone else. Some people think "the law" here is referring to scripture, although there is nothing specific from the Old Testament or Law of Moses that says that women should not speak in religious gatherings. Other people think Paul is speaking about the local laws and

culture at the time, where women were expected to stay silent in certain public situations. We remember from the previous passage that Paul's main concern is that when believers gather, the believers respect each other and they show that they are united in purpose and at peace with each other. If women were interrupting with questions, the women would disrupt that order. Paul gives practical instructions to women when Paul says if the women have questions or want to learn, the women should wait until the women are home and ask their husbands. Unmarried or widowed women would probably ask another male family member. Women would bring shame or dishonour on themselves if they caused disruption and spoke out in church. Paul is not being disrespectful of women, but Paul's focus is on orderly behaviour in worship.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: How would you translate Paul's instructions for women to be silent in church into your own language? How can you show that Paul's purpose is to give peace and order in the church? Pause this audio here.

In the second part of the passage, Paul uses questions Paul does not expect the Corinthians to answer in order to challenge the Corinthians' attitude. Paul uses a mocking tone. When Paul asks if the word of God, or message of God, started with the Corinthians, or if the Corinthians are the only ones who received God's message, Paul is addressing the believers' pride. The Corinthian believers seem to believe they are special or more important. Perhaps the Corinthian believers think they are the only believers with spiritual gifts, or that the spiritual gifts the believers in Corinth have are better than the gifts other believers have. But Paul wants the believers in Corinth to realize that there are many other believers, and the believers in Corinth are part of a larger church community in the world. Paul is reminding the believers that the message the believers received of God's truth and the good news, or gospel, is the same message that other believers have received.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Can you remember a time when you felt like you were better than others in a group, or when you saw someone acting like they were better than you? What could you say to help them think differently? How would you say it? Pause this audio here.

In the third part of the passage, Paul warns the believers that anyone who considers themselves to have the gift of prophecy, or any other spiritual gift, must accept and recognize that Paul's instructions are from the Lord Jesus. This means Paul is not just giving personal opinions, but Paul is telling the believers what Jesus commands. Paul is showing the believers that Paul speaks with the authority of Jesus. When Paul says, "If anyone ignores this, they will be ignored," some people think Paul means God will reject or ignore people who do not follow these instructions, while other people think it means the believers should discipline or send away from the church those people who reject these teachings. Either way, ignoring Paul's instructions would have a serious impact on a person who ignores those instructions. Paul wants the church to take Paul's instructions seriously.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: Paul uses strong language to clearly show the believers that Paul is speaking with the authority of Jesus, and people must respect and recognize that authority. What sort of people have authority in your community? Community leaders or family members perhaps? How do you show that you respect and accept those peoples' authority? Pause this audio here.

In the fourth part of the passage, Paul finishes Paul's instructions for the believers on how they should gather and worship together. Paul calls the believers "brothers and sisters" as a sign of affection, as Paul has throughout this letter. Paul really wants the believers to listen and understand how Paul cares for the believers. Paul once again says that the believers should strongly desire the gift of prophecy. Prophecy helps to build up and strengthen the church. Paul also says that the believers should not forbid speaking in tongues. Believers should feel free to speak in tongues in public as long as they do it in an orderly way, and someone can explain the meaning.

Paul's focus in this passage is to make sure that the believers respect each other well when they gather together. Paul shows how important it is to be obedient and humble and to accept and recognise that Paul's teachings are from Jesus. Paul challenges both women and men to behave in ways that reflect the way God acts in peace and order.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and its actions. Have someone or something represent Paul giving instructions to the church. First Paul speaks to the women. Have a group of women causing disruption and interrupting. Now have another group represent the women practicing quietness and asking questions at home. As you do this, think about how the two different situations feel for

everyone. Next Paul speaks to all the believers. Think about Paul's tone as Paul challenges the believers to not be arrogant or prideful. Again, have a group represent believers who listen to Paul and are humble, and have one person that represents someone who does not respect Paul's authority and teaching. Have the rest of the group exclude that person. Ask how the person feels when the group excludes them. Remember Paul's main focus is for the believers to help each other grow stronger and be encouraged, so Paul wants the believers' gatherings to be peaceful and orderly.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:34–40 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Women in the church
- Husbands of women in the church
- Believers
- Prophets or people with spiritual gifts
- And Jesus

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "Women should remain silent in the churches. Women are not allowed to speak but must be in submission, as the law says."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I care about the believers, so I am trying to help the believers have order in their gatherings, and this will help them to do that;" or
- "I care about God's honour, so I want to ensure that everyone behaves in a way that reflects respect and obedience to God's commands;" or
- "I care about these women. The women have been causing a lot of disruption, and it is not proper behaviour for women in church. I do not want them to bring shame on themselves."

Ask the person playing a woman in the church, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "It is hard for me to stay silent, but I understand that it is to keep things respectful and orderly;" or
- "I feel frustrated and offended that I cannot speak like I used to during the gathering;" or
- "I feel embarrassed that my behaviour has caused disorder. I am glad Paul is showing me how to behave in a better way."

Paul says, "Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached?"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want to remind the Corinthians that they are part of a larger community of believers, and the Corinthians need to follow the same order and respect as everyone else;" or
- "I am trying to challenge the Corinthians' pride and arrogance by reminding them that they are not the only ones who received God's Word;" or
- "Frustrated at their attitudes and behaviour."

Ask the person playing a believer in Corinth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I did not realize I was acting as if I was more important than others;" or
- "I understand that we need to be more humble and follow the same instructions as other churches;" or
- "Offended that Paul is challenging my attitude!"

Paul says, "If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I need the believers to understand that these instructions come from Jesus, not just my own opinion;" or
- "I am hoping the believers who prophesy or have spiritual gifts will recognize the authority of my teaching."

Ask the person playing a prophet, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I have to be humble and accept that Paul's instructions come from the Lord;" or
- "I do not need to follow Paul's instructions. My prophecy is just as important as Paul's teaching."

Paul says, "Anyone who ignores this will themselves be ignored."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am serious about maintaining order, and there will be consequences if people refuse to follow these instructions;" or
- "I hope this warning will make the believers realize how important it is to follow the teachings from the Lord;" or
- "Disappointed that I have to be so firm with these people that I know and love."

Ask the person playing a believer, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I realize that I could be excluded from the community if I do not follow Paul's instructions;" or
- "I do not want to be rejected or ignored, so I need to make sure I respect what Paul is teaching."

Paul says, "Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want the church to desire spiritual gifts, especially prophecy. But they need to do everything in a peaceful and respectful way;" or
- "It is important to allow tongues and prophecy, but only if it builds up the church and reflects God's order."

Ask the person playing a believer, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am glad we can still use our spiritual gifts, but I see that we need to be more careful about how we use them;" or
- "I am encouraged to focus more on prophecy because it helps everyone understand God's message."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 14:34–40 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul says women should keep silent in churches. In the Bible, the word **church** is never used to mean a building. Instead, the word church means a community of people who believe in Jesus. Use the same word or phrase for church as you used in previous passages. For more information about church, refer to church in the Master Glossary.

Women are not allowed to speak and should be obedient, as the **law** says. Law may refer to all the Scriptures together—the Old Testament. Or law may refer to the laws of the culture at the time. When you translate this word, use a general term for law.

Paul speaks to all the believers to challenge the believers' arrogant attitude. Paul asks, "Was it from you that the **Word of God** came?" The Word of God means everything that God tells people. When people in the New Testament talk about "the Word," or "the Word of God," or "the Word of the Lord," people usually mean the good news that Jesus has come into the world. Use the same word or phrase for Word of God as you have in previous passages. For more information about the Word of God, look up Word in the Master Glossary.

Paul says if anyone thinks they are a **prophet**, or thinks they have **spiritual gifts**, those people should accept that Paul's teaching comes from the Lord. Paul specifically asks if people think they are spiritual people, which here probably means people who think they have spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit. If you use the phrase spiritual gifts in your translation here, then use the same word that you have used for spiritual gifts in previous passages, and remember that gift is in the Master Glossary. A prophet is a person who gives messages from God to the people. Use the same word or phrase for prophet as you have in previous passages. For more information about prophets, look up prophet in the Master Glossary.

Here, **Lord** refers to Jesus. After the resurrection of Jesus, when people talk about Jesus and call Jesus "Lord," these people are saying that Jesus has authority over them, just like God has authority over people. When people call Jesus Lord after Jesus' resurrection, people are saying that Jesus is God. For more information on Lord, look up Lord in the Master Glossary.

Paul calls the believers **brothers**, or **brothers and sisters**, just as Paul does throughout this letter. Use the same word or phrase for brothers, or brothers and sisters, as you have in previous passages.

Paul closes this section on orderly worship by repeating that the believers should strongly desire to prophesy. A person prophesies when they give a message from God, or a **prophecy**. Use the same word or phrase for prophesy as you have in previous passages. For more information about prophesying, look up prophecy in the Master Glossary.

Paul also says that the believers should be allowed to speak in **tongues**, as long as they do everything in an orderly way. The gift of tongues is when the Holy Spirit makes a person speak in an unknown language that only God understands. In this unknown language, these people praise God or speak some truth about God. Use the same word or phrase for tongues as you have in previous passages. For more information on tongues, refer to tongues and prophecy in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 14:34-40

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (16677880 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the last part of the letter, Paul urged the believers to act in an orderly way. Now Paul will talk about another problem that the Corinthian believers have. The Corinthians are confused about the resurrection, or how God causes people who have died to live again. But first, Paul wants to remind the believers about the gospel, or the good news about Jesus, that they all believe. Paul shows that the resurrection is a necessary part of the good news we all believe. Paul also shows Paul's authority to talk about this subject. Then Paul will be ready to talk to the Corinthians about this problem.

Paul reminds the believers of what happened when Paul first told the believers the good news of God's plan to save people. The Corinthians received this good news and accepted that it was true. Paul saw the way the Corinthians trust the good news, or the gospel. Because the Corinthians know the good news is true, the Corinthians depend on the gospel like people depend on a good, firm place to stand.

God saves believers through this good news, if believers continue to trust the gospel. Paul compares the way believers value the gospel to a person who holds firmly or tightly to a rope. If believers do not hold tightly to the gospel, then they believe in vain, or with no result.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when someone began a project, like building a house or cleaning a house, but they stopped halfway through and never completed it. How useful was that half-finished project? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that he heard this gospel from other believers, and Paul then told the gospel to the Corinthians. Paul then describes the most important parts of the gospel that he told to the Corinthians. Paul shares these important parts in a formal statement of belief that would be easy for believers to repeat and remember.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: When you are teaching people something important, what are some ways that you make it easier for them to remember, such as with songs or special ways of speaking? Pause this audio here.

First, Paul says that Christ died in order to rescue us from the consequences of our sin. The story of the Scriptures, or Old Testament of the Bible, actually showed the people that they needed a savior who would come to be a sacrifice to rescue us from our sin. People buried Christ and placed Christ's body in a tomb or cave in a hillside. These people could see that Christ really died. Then on the third day, God raised Christ to life, again, like God said he would in his Scriptures.

To show that Christ was actually alive again and not just a ghost or a dream, Christ then appeared, or showed himself, to many people. Paul reminds the Corinthians of some of those times that Christ appeared. Christ appeared to Cephas, which is another name for Peter. Christ also appeared to "the Twelve." Paul means the original 12 disciples or followers of Christ. Paul uses the number 12 even though 1 member of the original 12, Judas, was no longer with the other 11 disciples.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think of some groups you are a part of that have a name, such as sports groups or a singing group. How did people choose the group's name? Think about groups that have changed when people left or the group started doing a different activity. When do you choose to keep the same name or change the name? Pause this audio here.

Christ then appeared to more than 500 believers at the same time. While most of these believers are still alive, some of them have died. Paul says these believers have fallen asleep, which is another way to say that someone has died.

Later Christ appeared to James, Christ's brother. Christ also appeared to all the apostles, a larger group than just the 12 disciples. This group probably included James and other leaders of the early church. Paul was not a part of those apostles at that time. Christ appeared finally to Paul. Paul says this was strange. When Christ appeared to Paul, it was as surprising as when a baby is born after a miscarriage, when everyone thought the baby was dead.

Paul then explains why he says this. Paul says that he is the least important apostle. People call Paul an apostle, but Paul says he does not deserve that title. This is because Paul used to persecute all believers in the church of God. Paul treated these believers harshly and unfairly. Paul even tried to kill some of these believers!

But because of God's grace, God made Paul the apostle Paul is now. This grace is God's kindness, or how God loves people who do not deserve God's love. God was kind to Paul and chose Paul to be an apostle, even though Paul did not deserve it. Paul says that he worked harder than the other apostles. However, Paul says, it was God's grace, not Paul, that did the work. It was God who helped Paul to work this hard.

Finally, Paul finishes up with an important point. Paul reminds the believers that it is not important whether it was Paul, or whether it was the other apostles, who preached the gospel to them, because they all preached the same gospel. The Corinthians believed the entire story of this gospel—Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and appearances to believers afterward. Now that Paul has reminded the Corinthians of these beliefs, Paul will correct their confusion.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four parts.

In the first part: Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Corinthians have accepted and depend on the gospel that Paul preached to the Corinthians. God saves the believers through this gospel if the believers continue to trust the gospel.

In the second part: Paul reminds the believers that the believers all believe the same gospel. The apostles taught this gospel to Paul, and then Paul taught it to the Corinthians. Paul uses a formal statement to explain what all believers in Christ believe. They all believe that Christ died and that people buried Christ. God brought Christ back to life, and then Christ appeared to many people.

In the third part: Paul lists some of the people Christ appeared to.

In the fourth part: Paul explains how God showed kindness to Paul and chose Paul to be an apostle. Paul emphasizes that Paul preached the same gospel as the other apostles.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Holy Spirit
- The Corinthian believers
- Christ Jesus
- Cephas, or Peter
- The Twelve
- Five hundred believers
- James
- The apostles
- And God

Paul has just finished giving instructions on how believers should act as they worship. Now Paul is about to talk about an issue that some of the Corinthians are confused about. First, let's talk about the story Paul will tell. Christ came to the earth and died for our sins. People buried Christ, but then God raised Christ from the dead. Christ appeared to many people. Though Paul was attacking the believers, Christ appeared to Paul too. God was kind to Paul. God called Paul to be an apostle. Believers taught Paul about the truth of the good news about Jesus. Then Paul started teaching others too. Paul taught the Corinthians, who accepted the good news about Jesus. Now Paul is going to remind the Corinthians of this story.

Paul uses a transition word to show that he is talking about something new. To prepare to talk about the issue, Paul reminds the believers of important truths that both Paul and the Corinthians believe. These truths are things that the believers would already know. Paul will then give an answer to the believers' problem based on these important truths. The believers can trust that Paul's response to this issue is good, because Paul has shown that he believes the same truth that the believers do.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, think of something unusual or surprising that you have learned recently. First, briefly say the surprising thing. Ask the others in the group how easy or hard it is to believe this information is true. Then explain the surprising thing again, but this time start with information that the others would know to explain how or why the surprising thing is possible. Then ask the others in the group how easy it is to believe your information now. Pause this audio here.

In the first part of this passage, Paul announces that he is about to remind the believers of the gospel. This is the same gospel that Paul preached to the Corinthians when Paul was with them. Paul calls the believers brothers, which is a friendly way to address people. Paul is talking to all the Corinthian believers, both men and women.

The believers have already accepted this gospel to be true and trust it, like people trust the strength of a well-made building. And if believers continue to trust the gospel, then God saves the believers through this gospel. If believers do not continue to depend on the gospel, then everything they hope their trust in Christ will bring will never happen. This will make their trust useless, like someone who lets go of a rope that is pulling something important up a cliff.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when someone continued to believe something very strongly, even though something difficult happened that made it hard to believe that truth or thing. What words or phrases would you use to describe that person's strong belief or trust? Pause this audio here.

In the second part, Paul then explains the truths that all believers believe. These are the same truths that other believers taught to Paul. Paul then taught them to the Corinthians. To help the believers remember these truths, Paul uses a formal statement of belief. There are four parts: Christ dies, people bury Christ, God brings Christ back to life, and then Christ appears to many people. Each of these four parts begins with the same word, which would help believers remember these things.

First, Christ died to rescue us from the consequences of our sins, just like God said in God's holy writings. Paul is referring both to specific passages that talk about Christ's death, as well as the whole Bible, which all points to Christ.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell the story of what Christ did and why Christ did it. Pay attention to the words and phrases you use to talk about why Christ died. Pause this audio here.

The next part is that people buried Christ, which shows that Christ really died. Then, like God said in the Scriptures, God raised Christ to life on the third day. Finally, Christ appeared to many believers.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss how you will talk about the four parts of this formal statement or reminder of what believers all believe. Think about the different methods or tools to help people remember information that you discussed in step two. Pause this audio here.

That was probably the end of the formal statement of belief. Now, in the third part, Paul lists some of the people who saw Christ. In this time, people valued the evidence from people who actually saw what happened. Paul is emphasizing how many people really saw Christ come back to life, not just a ghost or a spirit. Paul describes the people Christ appeared to in order to show the Corinthians that Christ appeared to people that they can trust. These people would not have lied about seeing Jesus alive!

Christ showed himself to Cephas, as well as to the rest of the men who followed Christ before Christ died. Paul calls these men "the Twelve," even though one member was no longer there. Groups often kept titles based on original numbers of members, even if the number of members changed. People respected these men, so they were reliable witnesses.

Christ appeared to 500 believers at the same time. Paul says that some of these 500 have fallen asleep, or died. However, most of these 500 believers are still alive, so anyone can talk with these people to confirm what the people saw.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, what words or phrases do you use to say politely that someone has died? Pause this audio here.

Christ appeared to James, Christ's brother, and then to all the apostles, or leaders of the church. Of all the people Paul has mentioned, Paul was the last to see Christ. Paul may be reminding the believers that Paul has authority to talk about the gospel, because Christ told Paul to share the gospel. However, Paul says that it was strange or surprising that Christ chose to show himself to Paul. Paul says it was as surprising as a baby that is born even though everyone thought the baby was dead.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, what are some words or phrases you would use to describe something unusual or surprising—something you do not think can happen? Pause this audio here.

In the fourth part, Paul describes God's kindness to Paul and what then happened. Paul explains what he means when he says it was strange that Christ appeared to him. Paul used to persecute the church, which means that Paul attacked all the believers in the church. Because of what Paul did, Paul says that Paul is the least important of the apostles. Paul does not even feel worthy of the title of apostle. However, Paul became an apostle not because of what Paul did, but because God was kind to Paul. That kindness was not useless. Instead, God's kindness helped Paul to do many good things. Paul worked harder than any of the apostles. Paul is not saying that he is better than the other apostles because Paul worked harder. Paul is saying that this hard work shows how kind God was, or how much grace God showed to Paul. Therefore, it does not matter to Paul who it was that told the Corinthians first about God's grace. It could have been anyone, but God chose Paul to be an apostle, to teach the gospel, and speak about the Corinthians' problems.

So Paul is a reliable teacher, because of God's grace that is working in Paul. Paul is also reliable because, as Paul has just shown, Paul teaches and believes the same thing that the other apostles do. The believers all preach the same truth, which Paul described in the formal statement of belief. And this is the same truth that the Corinthians believed. Now that Paul has shown their common beliefs, Paul can then begin to talk about the Corinthians' problem or confusion in the next passage.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to use drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, Paul's audience, Christ Jesus,

Cephas, the Twelve, the 500 believers, James, the apostles, and God. Consider drawing or acting out the story of the gospel, or what Jesus did for us, first. Then as Paul talks, refer back to that story.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Holy Spirit
- The Corinthian believers
- Christ Jesus
- Cephas, or Peter
- The Twelve
- Five hundred believers
- James
- The apostles
- And God

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "At this point, my brothers and sisters, I want to remind you about the good news I told you about. You accepted that this good news is true, and you trust God firmly because of it. Because of this good news, God saves you as long as you continue to depend on what I taught you. If you do not trust God firmly, then your faith does not help you."

Then Paul says, "For I told you about the teachings that other people told me. These things are very important: Christ died because of our sins, which is what the Scriptures said would happen. People buried Christ. The third day after that, God raised Christ to life. Again, this is what the Scriptures said will happen. Christ appeared to Peter, and then Christ appeared to the Twelve—his disciples. Afterwards, Christ appeared to more than 500 believers at once. Most of these people are still alive, although some have died. Then Christ appeared to James, and then to all the other apostles. And finally I also saw Christ even though I was not worthy to see him."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing all the people Christ appeared to, "What were you feeling or thinking when Christ appeared to you?" The people might answer things like:

- "I was amazed! I saw Christ die, and I knew that he was buried. I was so surprised that Christ was alive again!" or
- "When I first saw Christ, I was not sure if he was real. However, Christ showed us that he was really alive again as a person, not just a dream or a ghost;" or
- "I am sure that God really did bring Christ back to life, and I will tell everyone about what I saw. I want everyone else to be just as sure as I am."

Ask the person playing believers who are listening, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am thankful that Christ chose to appear to so many people after God made Christ alive again. I can be sure that this really happened and is not just a rumor;" or
- "I like the way Paul said these important parts of the gospel. I can remember and repeat those important parts;" or
- "I wonder why Paul is repeating all these truths that us believers already know and trust."

Paul says, "I say this because I am the least important of the apostles. I am not worthy of the title 'apostle,' because I hurt God's people. But God was kind to me and made me an apostle, and his kindness to me had good results. For I worked harder than any of the other apostles. But it was not really I who was working, but God. I did not work by my own ability, but God was kind to me and helped me to work. So it does not matter if I preached to you, or the other apostles preached to you. We all preached the same message. And that is the message that you believed."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want to show the Corinthians that these important parts of the gospel are reliable and that all believers agree that they are true. Then I can show how the answer to their problem is reliable because it matches the true gospel;" or
- "I am still amazed that God chose me to be an apostle. God can change even the worst people!" or
- "I work so hard because God helps me, not to earn God's help. God has shown me so much kindness that I want to preach and serve him!"

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I do not choose only perfect people to be believers. No one is perfect! I care for all people and want to show my kindness to them and save them, even people who hurt others;" or
- "I know that Paul cannot do all of this work on his own, so I will help him do it. I am always glad to help and care for my people;" or
- "I want my people to believe the truth, not a lie. That is why I have clearly shown Paul and the apostles what is true, so they can tell everyone else."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul calls the believers in Corinth "**brothers**." Since God is the Father of all believers, all believers are like brothers and sisters. So Paul frequently uses the word for brother when referring to a fellow believer. When there is more than one brother, the word can also mean brothers and sisters. Use the same words or phrases for brothers as you used in previous passages.

Paul wants to remind the believers of the **gospel**. The word gospel means "good news." The good news in the Bible is that God has made a way to save people. For more information on gospel, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for gospel as you used in previous passages.

Paul says that it is the gospel that has **saved** the believers. For more information about how the gospel saves someone, refer to salvation in the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for saved as you used in previous passages.

Paul says the believers must continue to trust this message, or they will **believe** with no results. If you believe in a message, you believe that message is true. You then trust that message and are committed to do what it says to do. For more information on believe, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for believe as you used in previous passages.

Christ died for our sins. Christ is the same as the word "Messiah," which refers to the special king and Savior that God had promised to send, who is Jesus. For more information on Christ, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Christ as you used in previous passages.

Christ died for our sins. This statement talks about how Christ **atoned** for our sins, or took away our sins so that we could be restored completely to a relationship with God. We had sinned and broken our relationship with God, but Christ's death brought us back together with God. In this case, you may want to translate this phrase in a general way—Christ died for our sins, or Christ died to address the problem of our sins.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use here. Remember the way you described what Christ did in script three. How will you talk about why Christ died for our sins? For more information on this idea, look up atonement in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Sin is an act of rebellion against God. Anytime that a person disobeys God's laws, that person sins. For more information on sin, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for sin as you used in previous passages.

Christ died, which is what the **Scriptures** said would happen. When people in New Testament times talk about the Scripture, or the Scriptures, they are talking about the part of the Bible that believers now call the Old Testament.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for Scriptures. Look up Scriptures in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Christ appeared to **the Twelve**. Christ chose 12 people to be his special disciples or students. People called this small group "the twelve disciples," or even just "the Twelve." These people followed Christ everywhere, learning from Christ and watching Christ.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "the Twelve." Look up disciples in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Christ also appeared to the **apostles**. An apostle is someone who is a witness to other people that Christ really had risen from the dead. An apostle preaches the gospel, establishes churches, and has authority from God to make decisions about spiritual matters. This group of apostles probably included the Twelve, James, and other leaders of the early church. For more information on apostle, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word for apostle as you have in previous passages.

Paul used to **persecute** the church of God. When people persecute you, they treat you cruelly and unfairly. People may beat you, or exclude you from society, or speak lies about you and take you to court. For more

information on persecute, refer to persecution in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for persecute as you have in previous passages.

The **church of God** means all the people on earth together who believe in Christ Jesus. For more information on church, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word for church or church of God as you have in previous passages.

Paul says he is an apostle because of God's **grace**. To show grace means to give someone something good that they do not deserve. This can often mean the salvation that God gives, but here it probably means the kindness God shows to Paul. For more information on grace, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for grace as you used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 15:12–19

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 15:12–19 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:12–19 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:12–19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul has just reminded the Corinthians of the gospel that all believers know to be true. Now Paul will show why he reminded the Corinthians of this truth. Some Corinthian believers have said that God does not raise dead people back to life. Paul says that if this is true, then God did not raise Christ back to life. And if God has not raised Christ back to life, then the good news the apostles preach has no meaning at all! Then the believers' faith in Christ would not help them. The believers would have no hope for the future. Paul is showing how this Corinthian idea does not make any sense.

To begin, Paul explains why he just reminded the Corinthians of the important truths of the gospel in the last passage. Paul has heard that some of the Corinthian believers say that there is no resurrection of dead people. This is an event that will happen in the future. When Jesus returns to rule as king forever, the people whom God has accepted will become alive again and receive a new body—a body that will never die again. People call this the resurrection of the dead or resurrection of the believers. Many people at that time believed that when a person died, that person's soul—or the inner, invisible part of that person—would live again, but that person's body would not. This may be why the Corinthians were wondering if God would really raise dead people with their body and soul back to life.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what do people believe will happen to people after they die? What happens to each part of a person? Pause this audio here.

Paul asks why some people say there is no resurrection. Paul is not expecting an answer. Paul is showing that he is surprised that the Corinthians would say this. Paul then explains that this idea does not match the gospel. Remember, Christ was dead. If the Corinthians say that God does not raise dead people to life, then God did not raise Christ to life. Paul knows this is false, and Paul has already shown the believers that they all believe that God raised Christ to life. However, now Paul will pretend an unreal situation is true. Paul will imagine that God does not raise any dead people to life, including Christ, to show what would happen.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, pick a small or silly topic that people have many opinions on, such as how something happened in your people's history. Have two members of the group pick different opinions. Then have both people take a turn and politely explain why the other person's opinion does not make sense. Both people should do this by explaining what other wrong things would be true if the other opinion were true. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that if God did not raise Christ to life, then the preaching, or the message that believers tell others, would be a lie and would be useless. This also means that when the believers trusted in Christ, it did not help them at all because Christ would still be dead. Since the apostles would be preaching a lie, the apostles would all be false witnesses. Witnesses are people who tell what they know to be true in front of a judge. If there were no resurrection, the apostles told a lie when they said that God raised Christ back to life. This lie is a very serious wrongdoing, like when someone lies in front of a judge in their government's court of law.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, when you have a complaint or problem with another person, and you must go in front of a judge, how do you prove or show what really happened? What kind of witnesses do you need? What would happen if these witnesses lied? Pause this audio here.

And if the good news that God raised Christ to life was a lie, then people could not trust Christ to forgive those peoples' sins. God raised Christ back to life to show that God is more powerful than sin. If Christ were still dead, then God would not be more powerful than death and sin. Christ would not be able to rescue believers from their sins.

If Christ were still dead, both believers who are alive and believers who are dead would be affected. In fact, people who have fallen asleep, or died, would still be guilty of their sins when those people died. So those people have died completely and cannot live again. Those believers would not be a part of God's kingdom in the future.

For the believers now, that would also mean that their hope is useless. Believers hope in Christ and trust that Christ will save them. But if Christ were dead, no one could save the believers. If the gospel was a lie, the believers' faith would be meaningless, and there would be no hope for the future after believers die. This would be terrible! Paul says that if this was true, then believers would be the most pitiful, or would be in the worst condition of anyone in the world!

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:12–19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Since believers teach that God has raised Christ back to life, it does not make sense for the Corinthian believers to say that there is no resurrection of the dead. Paul says that if it is true that God does not raise dead people to life again, then God did not raise Christ back to life.

In the second part: If Christ were not alive, then the believers would be telling lies about what God has done. If the good news about Christ were a lie, then it would be useless and there would be no reason that people should teach it. Also, people's faith would be useless because those people believe in a lie.

In the third part: If Christ were not alive then Christ could not forgive sins, so there would be no hope for anyone. And that would mean that Christ could not save anyone from their sins, so all believers would be guilty of their sins. So any believer who dies would not be with God. If this were true, then the believers would be in the worst situation, and people should pity or feel sorry for believers more than anyone else.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Holy Spirit
- The Corinthian believers who are listening to someone read this aloud
- The group of Corinthian believers who say that there will be no resurrection of the dead
- Christ Jesus
- The apostles who preached the same thing as Paul
- God
- And the believers who have died

In the last section, Paul reminded believers of what they all believe. Paul is now ready to talk about the Corinthians' problem. Paul shows how the group of Corinthians who say, "There is no resurrection of the dead," are wrong. The Corinthians probably do not understand why they are wrong. Paul is going to pretend there is no resurrection of the dead and explain what that would mean. This is not what Paul believes, but this is how Paul is warning the Corinthians that the Corinthians cannot believe the truth of the gospel *and* say that there is no resurrection of the dead.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, when you describe an impossible situation, how do you show that you do not believe it is true? As an activity, describe what your life would be like if you had not done something important, such as if you had not married your spouse or worked a certain job. Pause this audio here.

In the first part, Paul repeats the point that the apostles preach that God raised Christ back to life. Paul does not specifically mention the apostles in this passage. However, when Paul says "we preached," Paul is referring to himself and the other apostles. If the believers believe what the apostles preach, Paul says strongly that Paul cannot understand how people would say that God does not raise the dead back to life. Because if God does not bring any people back to life, then God did not raise Christ back to life. This is an important statement that Paul repeats several times, to emphasize how important, and terrible, this would be.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, when you are trying to convince someone else of something, how do you emphasize your main or most important point? Pause this audio here.

In the second part, Paul explains what would be true if God did not raise Christ back to life. The apostles and believers have been teaching that God raised Christ back to life. But if that were not true, then they would have lied about what God has done. The believers are like witnesses in front of a judge. Instead of telling the truth about what the believers know, the believers would have given false testimony or lied about God. To lie about God would be a very serious and terrible thing for someone to do—just like lying in front of a judge or an official. If the apostles and believers were lying, then it would be useless for people to preach or teach this message. Christ would not be able to help anyone, so it would also be useless for people to have faith in Christ.

In the third part, Paul says that if God did not raise Christ back to life, then the believers would have no hope. When God raised Christ back to life, God showed that he was stronger than sin and death. However, if God did not raise Christ back to life, then Christ did not save the believers from their sin. The believers would still not have a good relationship with God.

If believers were still guilty of their sins when they die, then the believers who have died trusting that Christ would save them would also still be guilty. And that would mean Christ did not save these believers, so the believers could not be with God after they die. The believers would be lost, or would have died completely. Any

believers who will die would be the same, so there would be no hope for believers after they die. The believers could only hope in a lie while they are alive; then when they die, the believers would see that their hope was in nothing. People then should pity believers more than they pity anyone else. While other people may be living bad or hard lives, believers would be living a worse life because they believe in a lie. Paul is clearly showing the Corinthians how the idea that God does not raise the dead back to life would be a very sad and hopeless idea to believe.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about a situation that you think is completely miserable or hopeless. In your language, what are some words or phrases you would use to describe this situation that is completely miserable or hopeless? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about someone you know who believes something that is wrong, and because of that belief, that person experiences terrible consequences. How do you feel about this person? How would you describe your sadness that they believe the wrong thing? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to use drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, the people listening, the group of believers who do not believe in the resurrection, Christ Jesus, God, and the believers who have died.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, remember that Paul has preached that God raised Christ back to life. You can act out how God has raised Christ to life again, as Paul describes it to the Corinthians. Show how one day, God will raise the dead to life again. However, the group of Corinthians that do not believe that will happen can shake their heads and look away to show they do not believe. Paul then says that if God does not raise people back to life, God did not raise Christ. Have Christ pretend to be dead the whole time Paul explains what that belief would mean. Each time Paul says if God did not raise Christ back to life, have Paul point to the person playing Christ, who is still dead. Pretend to be in front of a judge when Paul describes how the apostles would be lying. Pick objects to represent the believers' sin, and have the believers carry those items around. Have the believers pretend to die while the believers are still holding the sin. Since the believers are not with God after they die, have these believers pretend to be dead far away from God. The believers have no hope, so show how sad and miserable the believers are.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:12–19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Holy Spirit
- The Corinthian believers who are listening to someone read this aloud
- The group of Corinthian believers who say that there will be no resurrection of the dead
- Christ Jesus
- The apostles who preached the same thing as Paul
- God
- And the believers who have died

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "We preach that God has raised Christ back to life, so it does not make sense for you to say that God will not one day raise the dead believers back to life. If God does not raise dead people to life again, then God did not raise Christ to life again. And if God did not raise Christ to life again, it is useless for us to preach the gospel to you, and it is useless for you to believe the gospel. In addition, this would also mean we apostles are people who tell lies about what God has done. If God does not raise the dead to life, then we have told lies about God by saying that he raised Christ to life, when he really did not."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am worried for the Corinthians. I do not think the Corinthians realize how dangerous and wrong this belief is;" or
- "I care for the Corinthian believers and want the believers to continue to have faith in Christ. I show my love as I correct the believers and tell them the truth. I do not want the Corinthians to believe a lie!"

Ask the person playing the apostles who preached the same thing as Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am glad that God did really raise Christ from the dead. I would be very sad if the gospel was a lie!" or
- "I cannot believe some people do not believe that God raised Christ from the dead! I was there! I saw Jesus!"

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I know that my people will face many troubles in this life. I want to give them hope of a good future with me, which I have told them about in my word;" or
- "The message I have given to the believers is completely true. I would be angry with anyone who spreads lies about the gospel, because those people would be hurting and confusing my people;" or
- "I have the power to cause people to live again. I showed this when I raised Christ to life. I have told Paul to remind the Corinthian believers of my power."

Paul says, "For if God does not raise dead people to life again, then he did not raise Christ to life again. And if God did not raise Christ to life again, then it is pointless to trust Christ to forgive your sins. You are still guilty of your sins. Then also those people who have died trusting Christ have died completely and will never live again. If we can only hope that Christ will help us while we are alive here, people should pity us more than they pity anyone else."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Corinthians who believe that there is no resurrection of the dead, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am surprised! I did not realize what would be true if the resurrection of the dead was not real!" or
- "I am embarrassed. I see now how this belief does not make any sense;" or
- "My people believe that the body will die forever, which I thought was true too. It is hard to change my way of thinking."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:12–19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul says that believers **preach** that God raised **Christ** from the dead. When believers or apostles preach, they declare important news in an official way. Use the same word for preach that you have been using throughout 1 Corinthians. Christ is the same as the word "Messiah," which refers to the special king and Savior that God had promised to send, who is Jesus. For more information on Christ, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Christ as you used in previous passages.

So Paul is surprised that the Corinthians say that there is no **resurrection** of the dead believers. When Jesus returns to rule as king forever, the people whom God has accepted will become alive again and receive a new body—a body that will never die again! This event is called the resurrection of the believers. Because Jesus became alive again, we can be sure that God will also make us alive again.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **resurrection**. Look up resurrection in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

If God has not raised Christ to life again, then Paul says the believers' **faith** is useless. If you have faith in someone, you believe that what that person says about themselves is true. You then trust that person and are committed to do what that person tells you to do. The specific faith that Paul is talking about is when someone believes in Jesus. That person trusts that God will fulfill all God's promises, even when those promises seem impossible. For more information on faith, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for faith as you used in previous passages.

Also, the believers who have preached the gospel would be false **witnesses**, because those believers falsely **testify**, or give false information. A witness is someone who declares or testifies the truth about something that the witness has seen.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **witness** and **testify**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. For more information about testify, see testimony in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

If Christ is still dead, then the believers are still guilty of their **sins**. Sin is an act of rebellion against God. Anytime that a person disobeys God's laws, they sin. For more information on sin, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for sin as you used in previous passages.

If believers only have **hope** in Christ in this life, then believers deserve other people's **pity**. Pity is when people feel sadness and compassion for other people's pain and trouble. Hope is the confident expectation that something will happen. This hope is specifically to expect that Christ will save all believers. For more information on hope, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for hope as you used in previous passages. Use a word or phrase for pity that you discussed in step three.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 15:12–19

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 15:20–28

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 15:20–28 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:20–28 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:20–28 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the last section, Paul talked about what would be true if God did not raise Christ back to life. Now Paul will talk about what is actually true. God did raise Christ back to life, as a promise that God will one day raise the believers too. When God raises the believers, Christ will defeat all Christ's enemies and the world will end. Christ will give Christ's authority to God, and God will rule in every way.

To show that Paul is now talking about what actually happened, Paul says that God really did raise Christ to life again. Paul compares Christ to the firstfruits of the harvest. The firstfruits are the first crops that people pick off of plants at harvest time, which is when the crops are fully grown and ready for people to eat them. God's people would give these firstfruits as a gift to God. These firstfruits were a symbol of God's promise and the people's hope that the people would be able to gather the rest of the crops. So just like the firstfruits were a promise or guarantee of the harvest, Christ is like a promise to the believers. Like God raised Christ to life, God will also raise the believers to life again.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do people celebrate the harvest time? When do people celebrate? What kind of festivals or celebrations do your people have where they look forward to something good that will happen? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that all people die because of one person, Adam. Adam was the first man, and Adam disobeyed God. Because of Adam's sin, all people eventually die. But in the same way, because of another person, people who belong to Christ will live again. This second person is Christ. Paul makes this clear in the next sentence where Paul compares what Adam has done for people with what Christ has done. Because Adam is the ancestor of all people, and because all people sin like Adam, everyone will eventually all die. But when people trust in Christ, God will raise those believers to life again.

God has raised Christ to life again, but God has not yet raised the believers who have died. God raises people to life in a specific and right order. God will one day raise the believers to life just like he raised Christ. This will happen when Christ returns to the earth. Paul says that then the end of the world will happen. At that time, Christ will destroy the power and rule of all Christ's enemies. Christ will hand over, or give, the kingdom to God his Father. This means that Christ will stop ruling as king, and God the Father will rule instead.

Paul says that Christ must rule until Christ puts all enemies under Christ's feet. In Paul's time, a king would put his foot on the neck of an enemy to show that the king had defeated that enemy. So this means that Christ will defeat all Christ's enemies. The last enemy Christ will defeat is death. Christ will take away death's power. This means that from that time onwards, none of God's people will die.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture or history, what would kings or leaders do to show or announce that those kings or leaders had defeated their enemy? Why would they do this? Pause this audio here.

Paul then quotes, or says something from, the Scriptures to show that God is a part of this story too. Paul quotes from a psalm or song where God speaks to the "son of man," which means a human. The first meaning of this psalm is probably about how God lets humans control things on the earth. Christ often called himself the "son of man," so Paul says that this psalm is about God talking to Christ too. God has put everything under Christ's feet, which means God has given Christ authority over everything.

Paul then explains that "everything" does not include God. This is because God is the one who puts everything under the authority of Christ. But when God has placed all things under Christ's rule, then the Son, who is Christ, will place himself under God's authority. This may sound confusing, but remember who Paul is talking to. The Corinthians are arrogant and want to decide things for themselves. They are saying that the resurrection is not true. But Christ shows how Christ chooses to put himself under God's authority. Christ is still God and is just as important as God the Father. But even Christ is listening to and cooperating with God! Paul says that Christ will do this so God will be all in all, which means that God will rule in every way.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a time when a leader chose to put himself under the authority of another leader. Why did this leader do this? How did this leader do this? Pause this audio here.

Paul shows that both God and Christ are working together throughout this whole story. God raised Christ back to life so the believers can look forward to the day when Christ will defeat death and God will raise believers back to life.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:20–28 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul says that God has raised Christ from the dead as a promise that God will also raise the believers. Paul explains that people die because of one person, Adam, and in the same way, people who belong to Christ will live again because of another person, Christ. God raises people to life again in a proper order.

In the second part: Paul describes what will one day happen. Christ must rule until Christ has defeated all other powers, including death. God will raise all believers back to life. Then this world will end and Christ will give all authority to God.

In the third part: Paul explains how God and Christ work together in this story. Paul quotes a scripture that describes how God will put everything under Christ's authority except for God himself. Christ puts himself under God's authority, so God is the ruler of everything.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- God the Father
- Christ, the Son
- Adam
- And rulers, authorities, and powers

In the last section, Paul explained what would be true if God does not raise people to life. Now Paul will show what is actually true. God was able to raise Christ back to life because God has authority over all things. God will raise the believers to life again to show that God is more powerful than everything, including the way people die.

In the first part, Paul emphasizes that it really is true that God raised Christ back to life. God did this as a promise or guarantee that God will also give life to believers who have died. Paul says these believers have fallen asleep, which means these believers have died.

Paul explains that everyone dies because of one person. Because the first man, Adam, sinned, Adam and all Adam's descendants will eventually die. However, because of another person, people can live again. This person is Christ. Paul emphasizes that Christ was a man, or a human. If God could raise Christ, a human, to life again, God can and will do it again for the believers, who are also human.

Paul explains that God has not raised all believers back to life yet because God works with a process and in a certain order. God raised Christ to life as a promise to believers, so believers can look forward to when God will one day raise the believers. This will happen at the end of the world.

In part two, Paul explains what will happen when the world ends. Paul does not focus on the timeline for these events. Christ himself told us that we will not know when this will happen. Paul is just explaining what events definitely will happen because God raised Christ from the dead.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, talk about a trip that you will one day take, such as to a store, to a market, or to visit a friend. Talk about what things you will definitely do on that trip. Pay attention to the times you choose to describe an exact order of what you will do and to the times you do not. Pause this audio here.

Christ currently rules as king over Christ's kingdom, or over all people who believe in Christ. Though Christ rules as king, the enemy is working too. We can see this because people still die. However, one day Christ will destroy or end the power and rule of all Christ's enemies. Paul calls these enemies rulers, authorities, and powers. When Paul uses these three words, Paul generally means any kind of ruler—either a human or a spirit—who rebels against or refuses to obey God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, what are some words or phrases you would use to describe people who have authority or power? What words do you use for spirits who also seem to rule over people and places? Discuss what words you will use here for rulers, authorities, and powers. Pause this audio here.

Christ will defeat death last. Paul talks about death like it is a person who is an enemy. God will raise everyone who has died to life again, and people will no longer die. Then the way of living in this world will end. Now that Christ rules over everything, Christ will stop ruling as king to let God the Father rule instead.

In the third part, Paul explains how Paul knows this will happen. Paul also shows that God and Christ are working together throughout this whole story. Paul quotes from the Scriptures, or the Old Testament. The believers would probably know this quote, so Paul does not say where he is quoting from.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how do you show that you are quoting something else? How would you show this if you are quoting something that your listeners would know well? Pause this audio here.

Paul quotes from a psalm or song where God speaks to the "son of man," which is another word for a human man. The first meaning of this psalm is probably about how God gives authority to humans. Since Christ often called himself the "Son of Man," Paul says that this psalm is about God and Christ too. Paul says this psalm explains that God puts everything under Christ's feet, or under Christ's authority. Though the psalm says God has given authority, this has not completely happened yet. This quote is a prophecy, or something that explains what will happen in the future. Often, in the original language, writers would talk about something in the future like it had already happened, because it is so certain that it will happen. So at the end of the world, God certainly will give Christ authority over everything.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do people talk about prophecies, or things that people know will happen in the future? How do people show that people are speaking a prophecy? Pause this audio here.

Because God is the one who has the power to do this, God does not put himself under Christ's authority. God allows Christ to rule over everything except for God. Then the Son, Christ, puts himself under God's authority since God is the ruler of everything. Paul calls Christ "the Son," because of Christ's special relationship with God the Father. God does not force Christ to do this because Christ is less than God the Father. Instead, God gives all authority to Christ, and Christ chooses to put himself under God's authority. This means that Christ the Son does what God the Father asks him to, like Christ did when Christ died on the cross. This way, God is all in all, which is a phrase Paul uses to mean that God will rule in every way.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how would you describe a ruler who has a lot of power and authority? Now think about God, who has all power and authority! Discuss how you will describe how God rules everything in every way. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to use drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, the believers, God the Father, Christ, Adam, and the rulers.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, remember that Paul is speaking to the Corinthian believers as Paul reminds the believers what actually happened. You can act out the way that Christ was dead, but God raised Christ back to life. When Paul compares Christ to the firstfruits, you can act out harvesting the first crops. Act joyful and hopeful as you think about the rest of the crops you will one day harvest. When Paul talks about how everyone dies because of Adam, have people in the group stand with Adam and pretend to die. However, when people follow Christ, these people go stand next to Christ, and when these people die, act out how God will raise those people back to life. Pick some objects to represent everything in the world. God can hand those items to Christ to show how God gives Christ all authority. You can act out how Christ defeats and destroys the rulers and powers. Christ even puts Christ's foot on the necks of these rulers and powers. Christ puts himself under God's authority, so you can act out how Christ does what God asks Christ to do.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:20–28 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- God the Father
- Christ, the Son
- Adam
- And rulers, authorities, and powers

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "But the truth is that God really has raised Christ back to life. God raised Christ first, like the first produce of the harvest. Because of Christ, we know that God will raise all believers who have died. For it was because of a human that people must die, and so it is because of another human that people will come to life again. For because of Adam everyone dies, and because of Christ, God will make us all live."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am relieved that God really did raise Christ back to life. My life would be hopeless if God did not, just like Paul said earlier!" or
- "When Paul compared Christ to the first crops we gather, I could understand how Christ's resurrection is connected to our resurrection someday. God raised Christ to life and will certainly do the same for us, just like a farmer gathers the first fruits and then will certainly gather the rest!" or
- "Before Christ came, all we had to look forward to was death, because we all are like Adam. I am thankful that Christ came to give us life again!"

Paul says, "But God will raise each one in the proper order: God raised Christ first, like the first produce of the harvest. Then, when Christ returns, God will also raise those who belong to Christ. Then the world will end. This will happen when Christ gives the kingdom to God the Father. Christ will do this after Christ has defeated all those who rule, have authority, and are powerful in this world. For Christ must rule as king until Christ has defeated all Christ's enemies. The last enemy Christ will destroy is death itself—then people will no longer die."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Christ, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am currently ruling over the believers, who obey God and live in a right relationship with God. I care for my people and will defeat every power that rebels against God and hurts my people;" or
- "I do not want my people to worry about the strength of my enemies. I have told and shown the believers that I am more powerful, and I will have Paul remind the believers that I will defeat these enemies;" or
- "I want to let God the Father rule, since the Father is the perfect king. I want to do what my Father says because the Father's directions are always the best."

Paul says, "For the Scriptures say that God 'has put everything under him.' The word 'everything' in this Scripture obviously does not include God himself. This is because God is the one who puts everything under the authority of Christ. When God has done this, Christ himself, the Son, will place himself under God, who placed all things under Christ. Christ will do this in order that God may rule over everything in every way."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I know that Christ will rule perfectly, so I want to put everything under Christ's authority;" or
- "Christ and I work together, along with the Holy Spirit, and we love each other;" or
- "I do not want my people to worry about the future, so I give my people prophecies. I also do not want my people to be confused, so I will explain the prophecies to my people as well."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:20–28 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul says that God really did raise **Christ** back to life. Christ is the same as the word "Messiah," which refers to the special king and Savior that God had promised to send, who is Jesus. For more information on Christ, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Christ as you used in previous passages.

Christ is like the **firstfruits** of the harvest. The firstfruits are the first grain or fruit that people pick off of plants at harvest time. God's people would give these firstfruits as a gift to God. These firstfruits were a symbol of God's promise and the people's hope that they would be able to gather the rest of the crops.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **firstfruit**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The **resurrection** of the dead comes because of the work of one person, Christ. When Jesus returns to rule as king forever, the people whom God has accepted will become alive again and receive a new body—a body that will never die again! This event is called the resurrection of the believers, or of the dead. For more information on resurrection, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for resurrection of the dead as you used in previous passages.

When the world ends, Christ will hand over the **kingdom** to God. This kingdom, which people sometimes call the kingdom of God, does not refer to a physical place, like a country somewhere on this earth. The kingdom of God is everywhere God rules, and where people obey God and live in a right relationship with God. For more information, refer to kingdom of God in the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for kingdom or kingdom of God as you used in previous passages.

Christ will do this after he destroys every kind of **rule, authority, and power**. Paul uses these words to mean both humans or evil spirits who rule and have authority, power, and control over people. Someone who has authority has the right and the power to make decisions and judgments. Someone who has power has the strength and ability to control or harm people. So these are any kind of rulers who rebel against God.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "rule, authority, and power." Remember the discussion you had in step three about these words. Look up authority, demon, and supernatural spirit in the Master Glossary for more information about these rulers. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The Son will then put himself under God's authority. The Son, or the Son of God is a title for Jesus. Jesus is called the Son of God because Jesus has a special relationship with God the Father. God and Jesus love each other in the way that a father and a son love each other.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **the Son**. Look up Son of God in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 15:20-28

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (13198555 KB)

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1 Corinthians 15:29–34

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 15:29–34 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:29–34 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:29–34 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the last part of Paul's letter, Paul described what God will do when God keeps God's promise to raise Christ back to life. In this part of Paul's letter, Paul again describes what would be true if God did not raise dead people back to life. If Christ's resurrection were not true, then the way believers are acting would be useless. However, since the resurrection is true, Paul urges people to live in the right way.

In this section, Paul again talks about what people's lives would be like if God did not raise dead people back to life. Paul has heard that some of the Corinthian believers are receiving baptism on behalf of the dead. In that time, believers most likely baptized each other by putting each other fully in water. A believer does this to show that the believer is repenting before God and asking for God's forgiveness. The believers also do this to show they belong to Jesus and want to follow Jesus.

It is not clear what Paul means when he says the believers are receiving baptism for the dead. Perhaps the Corinthians did these baptisms to try to help believers who died without receiving baptism, which is not the right way for people to think about baptism. Perhaps the Corinthians did these baptisms to show how the believers hoped to see dead believers that they loved again at the resurrection. No one mentions this anywhere else in the Bible and we are not sure why the Corinthians were doing this.

Paul is not clear what he means when he says the believers are receiving baptism for the dead. Paul also does not say if what the believers are doing is the right way for people to think about baptism. No matter why the Corinthians did this, Paul is trying to show that this way of baptizing would not make sense if there were no resurrection. If God does not raise the dead back to life, all believers would be dead forever, even if those believers were baptized.

If God does not raise anyone back to life, not even Christ, then the good news would be a lie. And if the good news were a lie, Paul and the apostles would have no reason to risk their lives to speak about the good news. Paul reminds the Corinthians that believers are constantly in danger of dying. Paul says Paul is in danger too. This is just as certain as the fact that Paul is proud of and boasts that the Corinthians believed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about how a parent is proud of how a child has learned from a teacher. In your language, how would this parent talk about their child? Pause this audio here.

Unbelievers opposed Paul almost everywhere Paul went. When Paul was in the town of Ephesus, people attacked Paul as fiercely as violent animals attack other animals. Paul would be crazy to constantly go into these dangerous situations if the good news about the resurrection were a lie. Paul would not be helping anyone, and if someone killed Paul, Paul would be dead forever! Paul would have suffered for nothing.

If God does not raise the dead back to life, Paul says believers should just try to enjoy this life instead of risking their lives spreading a lie. Like in the popular saying, the believers should just eat a lot and get drunk. There would be no point to life, since everyone would eventually die and stay dead forever.

However, the resurrection of the dead is true. Paul tells the believers to stop believing any false teachers who say that God does not raise people from the dead. As people often say, if you make friends with bad people, you will start to behave in a bad way yourself. Paul tells the believers to stop behaving foolishly like a drunk person. Since the believers have hope in the future resurrection, the believers should not sin but do everything they can to avoid sin.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Imagine you were one day going to an important event, like a sports championship or a big wedding. As you looked forward to that day, what would you do to prepare? How would you act differently if you were not going to that important event? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that some of the Corinthians have no knowledge of God. Paul means that these Corinthians do not know God and God's ways. Instead, these Corinthians are sinning and believing lies, instead of believing the truth about the resurrection.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about a family member you do not know very well. What are some beliefs that are important to that family member? How does that family member act? Now think about a family member you do know well. What are some beliefs that are important to that family member? How does that family member act? Which family member was easier to talk about? Pause this audio here.

Paul says the Corinthians should be ashamed of this. Paul wants this shame to cause the Corinthians to stop sinning and learn to know God. The Corinthians should live like they believe in the good news: that God did raise Christ back to life so Christ has rescued the believers from their sins. The Corinthians should follow God's way of living as they look forward to the resurrection of the dead.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what are some times when someone like a parent or a teacher would cause someone else to feel shame? What do you do when you feel shame?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:29–34 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: The resurrection gives meaning to believers' lives. If God does not raise anyone back to life, it would be pointless for people to receive baptism for the dead or to risk their lives for the gospel. Nothing people did in this life would change the fact that people would die forever. So if God does not raise anyone back to life, believers should just enjoy the time they are alive.

In the second part: However, God will raise people back to life. Paul tells the believers not to listen to anyone who says there is no resurrection. Instead, Paul urges the believers not to sin. Paul says the Corinthians should feel ashamed because they do not know God's ways.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Holy Spirit
- The Corinthian believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- The group of Corinthians who do not believe in the resurrection of the dead
- The group of believers who are receiving baptism for the dead
- The believers who have already died
- The apostles and believers who risk their lives
- Christ Jesus, our Lord
- The violent people at Ephesus
- And God

In part one, Paul will pretend again that an unreal situation is true. Paul will imagine that God does not raise any dead people to life, including Christ, to show how the believers' life would have no meaning if that were true. Again and again, Paul asks questions, as if Paul is speaking to the Corinthian believers. Paul asks why people would live in certain ways if the resurrection were not true. Paul is not expecting an answer, but instead showing that what people are doing would not make sense if the resurrection would not happen.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, imagine a situation that is not real, like that the sun shines at night time. Talk about how people would have to change the way they lived in this unreal situation. Pay attention to the way you describe how the things people do would be pointless in this new unreal situation. Pause this audio here.

Paul first mentions people who receive baptism for the dead. While it is not clear what the Corinthians were doing here, the Corinthians were probably hoping to change something for dead people or looking forward to something for themselves after the Corinthians die. However, if God does not raise dead believers back to life, nothing believers do now would change what would happen to anyone after they die. This baptism would be pointless.

Paul also says that it would be pointless for apostles to risk the apostles' lives to share the gospel if there were no resurrection. Paul does not specifically mention the apostles in this passage. However, when Paul says "we risk our lives," Paul is referring to himself and the other apostles. These apostles would be telling a lie that could not help anyone, not even themselves. Yet Paul says he and the apostles are in danger every hour, which means that they are constantly in danger. Paul says, "I die every day," which means someone could kill Paul any day!

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What are some ways in your language to describe things that are constantly happening, such as how people breathe? How would you describe something that could happen at any time, such as a bug flying by? How would you describe being in a very dangerous situation? Now discuss how you will describe how Paul is in danger every day. Pause this audio here.

Paul declares it is really true that Paul is in danger. Paul swears, or solemnly declares, that he is certainly in danger, just as certainly as Paul boasts about the Corinthians. Paul is reminding the Corinthians that Paul cares about the Corinthians as he calls them brothers, or dear friends. Paul boasts, or takes pride, that they believe in Christ Jesus. Paul says Jesus is Paul's Lord, or master, as well as the Corinthians' Lord. Paul is glad of what our Lord Jesus has done in the Corinthians' lives.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Paul solemnly declares that he is in danger to help the Corinthians understand how true that danger is. In your culture, what are some things that people say to emphasize that these people are really telling the truth? When are some times when people would swear or solemnly promise something? Pause this audio here.

Paul then tells the Corinthians about one of the times Paul was in danger. Paul spent some time in the city of Ephesus, which is a city to the east of Corinth. Paul says he fought people in Ephesus who were vicious, like violent animals. Sometimes Paul had arguments with those people. Sometimes the people formed an angry crowd that tried to hurt the believers. If Paul only had human hopes, or if Paul thought that he would stay dead after he died, Paul would have suffered for nothing. Paul says that there was no reason to face these dangerous people just to tell them a lie.

Stop here and look at a map of Ephesus as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when people attacked other people, either with harsh words or with violent actions, or both. Pay attention to the way that you describe that attack. Pause this audio here.

If God does not raise the dead back to life, then Paul says that there would be no reason to try to live in a right way. Nothing anyone did would change the fact those people would one day die and stay dead forever. So it would make more sense for people to enjoy this life since people would not live again. Paul quotes a popular saying that the Corinthians would know, so Paul does not mention where the saying is from. This saying says that people should eat lots of food and drink lots of alcohol, because no matter what people do, people will die soon anyway.

However, God does raise people from the dead. In the second part, Paul tells people how people should live, since the resurrection is true. Paul tells people not to listen to false teachers who say the resurrection will not happen. Again, Paul quotes another popular saying or proverb that Paul and Paul's listeners accepted as true. It is not from the Scriptures, but from a Greek writer. This writer said that the company you keep, or the people you spend time with, will affect you. If you spend time with bad people, your character will become bad, meaning you will start to behave in a bad way too.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, what are some proverbs or sayings that people accept as true? How do people share these sayings? Why do people do so? Pause this audio here.

Paul says, "Stop this!" Instead of acting like drunk people, who behave foolishly, believers should behave like sober people. Sober people can learn and act in the right way. Paul tells the believers to stop sinning. Paul criticizes or rebukes the believers when Paul says that some of the people do not know God. These people do not know about God and God's ways. These people do not believe that God has the power to raise people back to life. Instead, these people sin and do not have a good relationship with God. Paul says that these people should feel ashamed about this. He wants this shame to cause these people to stop sinning and learn to know God.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to use drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, Paul's audience, the believers who do not believe in the resurrection, the believers receiving baptism for the dead, the believers who have already died, the apostles, Christ Jesus, the violent people at Ephesus, and God.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, you can have Paul describe each action and ask the believers if it makes sense to do these things if there were no resurrection. The believers can answer, "No!" You can act out the baptisms and the way people attack Paul and the apostles. When Paul says that if God does not raise the dead, then everyone should just eat, drink, and do what they want, have people act that out. Then Paul can tell them, "Stop! It is true that one day God will raise you and all dead believers back to life!" When Paul tells the believers not to listen to the false teachers, the believers can move away from the people who say the resurrection is not true. Show how these people should stop sinning and instead learn to know God.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:29–34 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Holy Spirit
- The Corinthian believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- The group of Corinthians who do not believe in the resurrection of the dead
- The group of believers who are receiving baptism for the dead
- The believers who have already died
- The apostles and believers who risk their lives
- Christ Jesus, our Lord
- The violent people at Ephesus
- And God

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "If God does not raise the dead back to life, it does not make sense for people to receive baptism for the dead. If God does not raise the dead back to life, what those people are doing is useless."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the believers receiving baptism for others, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I care for the people who have died. I look forward to when I can see those people again, when God raises the dead back to life;" or
- "If God does not raise the dead back to life, then I would never see people again after those people die. But I am glad that is not true, because that would be very sad;" or
- "I want to show everyone that I follow Jesus! I am excited to receive baptism. This shows that I am a part of the group of believers, even those who have died."

Paul says, "And if there were no resurrection, why are we willing to constantly risk our lives to preach about the resurrection? Every day I am in danger of dying. This is true, dear friends. It is as certain as the fact that I am proud that you follow Christ Jesus our Lord. In the city of Ephesus, I fought with vicious people who attacked me like dangerous animals. I did not get any human benefit from fighting with these people. If God is not going to raise the dead to life again, then as the saying goes, 'We will eat a lot and get drunk. We will soon die anyway.'"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "If I was just spreading a lie, I would not go talk to dangerous people! That lie could not help anyone, and I would have no hope to keep going!" or
- "I am thankful that God gives me strength and courage to continue spreading the good news. Sometimes I am scared when I go to those dangerous places!" or
- "We face danger because the truth of the good news gives us hope! I want the Corinthians to have that hope too!"

Paul says, "Do not believe the false teachers. It is true what people say, 'If you stay with bad people, you will become bad like them.' Stop being foolish. Stop doing what is wrong. Some of you do not know about God's ways. I write this to make you feel ashamed."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the believers who are listening, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am ashamed that I do not have a good relationship with God. I did not know enough about God's ways, so I did not realize that I was listening to lies about the resurrection;" or
- "I do not want to feel shame! I must stop sinning and learn to know God;" or
- "I am embarrassed that I believed these lies! I am thankful that Paul corrected us, so that we could learn the truth."

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "It makes me sad when my people believe lies. These lies do not give them hope, and I want to give my people hope. This hope will help them when their life is hard;" or
- "I care for my people and want to have a good relationship with my people. I have given my people many ways to learn to know me;" or
- "Even when my people do not try to know me and follow false teachers, I will not give up on my people. I will send messages and people to correct my people and help my people learn the truth."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:29–34 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul says if there were no **resurrection**, then there would be no reason for people to act in certain ways. When Jesus returns to rule as king forever, the people whom God has accepted will become alive again and receive a new body—a body that will never die again! This event is the resurrection. For more information on resurrection, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for resurrection of the dead as you used in previous passages.

Paul says there would be no reason to **baptize** a person for the dead. To baptize someone means to immerse that person in water. A person receives baptism to show their repentance and need for forgiveness. Baptism is also a sign that these people now belong to Jesus and want to follow Jesus. For more information on baptize, refer to baptism in the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for baptize as you used in previous passages.

Paul says that Paul **boasts** that the Corinthians believe in Christ. Use the same word or phrase for boasts as you used in previous passages.

Paul calls Jesus "**Christ**" and "**Lord**." Christ is the same as the word "Messiah," which refers to the special king and Savior that God had promised to send. A lord is a master over other people, who has full authority. For more information on Christ and Lord, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same words or phrases for Christ and Lord as you used in previous passages.

Paul tells the believers to stop **sinning**. Sin is an act of rebellion against God. Anytime that a person disobeys God's laws, that person sins. For more information on sin, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for sin as you used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 15:29–34

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (12886320 KB)

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1 Corinthians 15:35–41

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 15:35–41 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:35–41 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.

5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:35–41 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the last section, Paul told the believers how the believers should live because God really did raise Christ from the dead. Now Paul talks about the bodies believers will have when God raises the believers back to life. To help the Corinthian believers understand God's plan for their bodies, Paul compares the way God changes the believers' bodies to how God changes seeds to plants. Paul also reminds the believers that God has already created many different bodies or things to live in different places. God has a good plan for the resurrection!

Paul knows that the Corinthians do not understand how God will cause a dead body to live again. When people bury a body, the body starts to rot and decay. The Corinthians thought, "Surely those rotting bodies cannot live again!" Since the Corinthians could not understand how God raises the dead, some people thought that there can be no resurrection. But Paul says these people are foolish! These people have forgotten that God is more powerful than the way bodies decay, and God will cause them to live again in a good way!

Paul describes the way a plant grows to explain how God resurrects people. When a person plants a seed, like a grain of wheat, in the ground, God causes the seed to grow into a plant. People do not put a plant in the ground. And when the plant grows, there will no longer be a seed, only the plant. The seed becomes the plant, so the two are the same thing, or being. God is the one who decides what form or shape is right for each seed to become.

Stop here and look at a picture of grain as a group. In your culture, what is a common seed that many people would know? What full-grown plant does the seed grow to become? Pause this audio here.

It is the same way with people's bodies! People put a person's body into the ground when that person dies, just like they put a seed in the ground. And in the same way God causes the seed of a plant to grow into a plant, God will change the person's body to be ready to live again.

Paul says God gives each kind of seed a different shape, just like God gave all living things their own shape. God gave human beings, farm animals, birds, and fish all different kinds of bodies. These bodies are not all the same. If God can make so many kinds of bodies here on earth, certainly God can make a different sort of body for the resurrection.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about human bodies. What are some things humans can do that animals cannot? Think about some farm animals that live in your area. What are those animals' bodies good at doing? Think about some birds and fish in your area. What are some special or different things that those animals can do? Pause this audio here.

Paul also says there are earthly bodies and heavenly bodies, or things God created to live on earth and things God created to live in the sky. Each of these have their own different glory or beauty. The sun shines differently than the moon. The moon shines differently than the stars. Each star even shines in a different way than another star! And yet they are all beautiful, just in different ways. God makes bodies to live on earth and bodies to live in the sky. And God has given both kinds of bodies different kinds of glory or beauty. God will change our bodies to be ready to live in heaven, where God lives, and those bodies will be beautiful!

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:35–41 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul knows that some people will wonder what kind of bodies believers will have when God raises the dead. To explain, Paul compares people's current bodies and people's future bodies with how seeds grow into plants. God changes seeds into plants, just like God will change our bodies so our bodies will be ready to live again in a new way.

In the second part: God has made many different kinds of bodies and things, both on the earth and in the skies. Each has their own different beauty and form. If God can make so many different kinds, God certainly can make a different sort of body for believers when God raises believers back to life.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- The Holy Spirit
- And God

Though Paul has been explaining in the last few sections why the resurrection is true, Paul knows that some people will still have questions. Paul knows that the Corinthians will wonder how God will raise people back to life and what people's bodies will be like when God does. Paul assures people that God is able to give people good bodies to live again. To explain, Paul compares a person's body to other bodies, or to things in nature. In the original language, Paul uses a word for body that means the form or shape of all of these things—a person's body or things in nature. Sometimes, people call the bodies of humans and animals "flesh," since the body includes the flesh, or the soft part of a person's body.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, what words or phrases do you use for living bodies, like human and animal bodies? What words or phrases do you use for the body or form of things like plants, stars, the sun, and the moon? Discuss what words or phrases you will use for each throughout this passage. Pause this audio here.

In the first part, Paul begins with two questions Paul knows someone will ask. These are two real questions. Paul was not thinking of a specific person who would ask the questions. In fact, Paul thinks that several people will ask, "When God raises dead people back to life, will people have the same body that people buried?" Whoever asks these questions will want to know the answer.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, pretend you are a teacher and pick a small topic to explain to the others in the group, such as how to do a task or how something works. Take a moment to think of some questions people may ask about this topic. Then explain the topic and answer those questions as you do. Pause this audio here.

Paul says this is a foolish question! Some translations say "You foolish person!" Paul is not speaking to a specific person. Instead, Paul is saying that whoever asks this question should understand what God can do, but they do not. However, Paul still answers the questions, because Paul wants these people to understand. Paul describes something God is already doing with plants to explain how God will prepare people's bodies to live again.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What are some words or phrases you would use to describe someone who does not know something that the person should know? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that when someone plants a seed in the ground, that seed is not yet the plant that will grow. People put a bare seed, without any leaves or roots, into the ground. Paul says the seed must die before it can grow into a plant. When Paul says that the seed must die, Paul means that the seed will no longer exist in the same way. God changes the seed into a plant. God gives the seed a new body or form. God can also change the way a person's body lives or exists. Like the seed, God gives people new life in a good body, even if someone has died.

In the second part, Paul explains that God has already created many different kinds of bodies, each with its own purpose and beauty. God has created many different plants that grow from seeds. Paul also says that God has

created different flesh, or physical bodies, for each kind of living thing. Men, or people, have one kind of body, which is different from animals' bodies. Paul is probably talking about farm or household animals that people use for work and food. Birds and fish also have different kinds of bodies than humans and farm animals. This shows that God can create many different kinds of bodies.

Just as God creates different kinds of bodies on earth, God also creates different kinds of heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. Here, the word heaven refers to the sky, or the place where the sun and stars are. The earthly bodies are anything on the earth, like the people and animals Paul just mentioned. Paul says each kind of body has a different kind of glory or splendor, which means they have their own beauty. This includes peoples' current bodies, even though those bodies must die. Paul is explaining that God has created all these different kinds of bodies that are good and beautiful, and are ready to live in different places, like the earth or the sky.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to use drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, Paul's audience, the Holy Spirit, and God.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, someone can ask Paul the questions at the beginning. Show how a person plants a seed in the ground, then how the seed changes and grows into a plant. Show that God is the one who changes the seed to a new form or body. Think about and draw some different kinds of animals, birds, and fish. Notice the differences in their bodies. Now think about the sun, moon, and the stars. If any are in the sky right now, go out and look at them! See how each one has its own different beauty.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:35–41 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- The Holy Spirit
- And God

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "But someone may ask how God brings the dead people back to life and what people's bodies will be like. What a foolish question! Think about a seed as an example. You must bury a seed so that it will grow. When you plant seeds, the plant that grows is not the same form as the seed you planted. For you only plant a seed, such as wheat or another plant. But God gives it the form that God has decided the plant should have."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I was worried about the resurrection, because I know how people's bodies decay when they die. If people have been dead for a while, only their bones are left! I did not understand how God could cause those people to live again when there are just bones left;" or
- "I have seen how a seed grows into a plant! I understand now that God can change something to a new form, without changing what that thing is. A flower seed will grow into that same flower plant. In the same way, God changes our bodies to be ready to live again without changing us into someone else;" or
- "I am glad that God is powerful and can change our bodies to be ready to live again. Now I am looking forward to when I can see what God does!"

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am surprised that the Corinthians still do not understand yet that God is powerful! God knows what will happen, so God already has a good plan for everything;" or
- "I have seen the amazing things God does. Even the way that plants grow is amazing. God can change a small seed into a huge plant! I know God can do amazing things to our bodies too;" or
- "I trust that God is powerful and will do what he says he will. This gives me comfort about the future, because nothing can stop God! I want the Corinthians to have this same comfort too."

Paul says, "God gives each kind of seed a different form. All living things have different kinds of bodies. Human beings, animals, birds, and fish all have different kinds of bodies. And there are things both in the sky and on the earth. The things in the sky are beautiful in one way, and the things on the earth are beautiful in a different way. The sun is beautiful in one way, the moon is beautiful in another way, and the stars are beautiful in their own way. In fact, the stars each have their own beauty."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am amazed by the beauty of the sun and the moon and the stars. God is a very skilled creator!" or
- "I see how God has made a fish to live in water and a person to live on land. God is very good at making bodies to live in the places God wants them to live;" or
- "When I look at the different animals and birds, or at the stars in the sky, I remember how many things God has created. I remember that God knows what he is doing and has a good plan for everything."

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "When my people trust me, they do not have to worry about the future. I do not want my people to be worried and afraid!" or
- "I love to create beautiful things! I put beautiful things around my people to bring my people joy and remind them that I am their creator and I do good work;" or
- "I already know what will happen in the future and have a good plan. I will tell Paul to remind the believers of this."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:35–41 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

In this passage, Paul answers two questions about the **resurrection**. When Jesus returns to rule as king forever, the people whom God has accepted will each become alive again and receive a new body—a body that will never die again! This event is the resurrection. For more information on resurrection, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for resurrection of the dead as you used in previous passages.

Paul says that **heavenly** bodies and earthly bodies are different. Here, the word heaven means the visible sky: the place where birds are flying, where we can see clouds, and where we can see stars at night.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **heaven**. Look up heaven in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul talks about many kinds of **bodies**. A body is the structure or form of a person or animal. This includes the flesh, which is the muscles and fat, or the soft part of a person. So sometimes people use the word flesh for body. Body can also mean the form or shape of anything on earth or in the skies.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **body** throughout this passage. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that when you sow a **seed**, the seed becomes a plant. You have used the word for seed in two previous passages in 1 Corinthians. Use the same word here as you used in those passages. For more information, see seed in the Master Glossary.

Paul says each kind of body has its own **glory** or splendor. Here, glory means beauty, because it refers to the beauty of a thing. You may want to use a word or phrase that means beauty.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 15:35–41

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 15:42–49

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 15:42–49 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:42–49 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.

5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:42–49 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the last section, Paul reminded the Corinthians how God makes different kinds of bodies to live in different places. God also changes bodies, like how God causes a seed to grow into a plant. Now Paul will explain that God does the same to our bodies. In our lifetime, our bodies will die and decay. When God raises the dead back to life, God will change us and give us a body ready for living in heaven.

So just like the seed in the last section, Paul says in this section that God will change our bodies too. When people bury a body, the body will decay. It is ugly, it brings dishonor, and it is weak. All human bodies are like this, and all people will die. However, when God raises a person back to life, God will change that person's body. That person's body will not decay or die, but the body will be beautiful and strong.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: There are parts of a person that you can see, like their body. There are also parts that you cannot see, like the inner part of a person where that person thinks and feels. Describe a person and the good and bad parts of that person as a human. How do people talk about their bodies? Is a person's body one of the good or bad parts of that person? What makes a person's body this way? Pause this audio here.

Right now, peoples' bodies are natural, or earthly, which means that God made them to live on this earth and in this time. However, God will raise each person back to life with a spiritual or heavenly body. This means that God's Spirit will create that person's body and give the body life. This body will be ready for life in heaven where God lives.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, where do people believe that gods live? Where is this place? What kind of people or spirits can be in this place? Pause this audio here.

Since there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Paul gives proof from the Scriptures to explain how Paul knows this. God created the first man, Adam, as a living being. Remember how earlier Paul compared Christ to Adam? Paul said earlier that all people are like Adam, so all people die. But Paul also said that everyone who belongs to Christ will live again.

In the original language, Adam is the same word for "man." So in this passage, Paul calls Christ the second Adam, or the second type of man. Paul calls Christ a second type of man because Christ is the first person that God raised back to life with a new body. Paul says that Christ is a life-giving spirit, or that Christ's spirit gives life. Because God raised Christ's spirit and body back to life, Christ's spirit can give life to others. Paul said that the spiritual body, which Christ has, came after the natural body. Paul explains that the natural body comes first, and then the spiritual body replaces the natural body.

God made the first man out of the dust of the earth. Christ, the second kind of man, has a body for living in heaven. Adam's descendants, or all people, have bodies like Adam's body, which are only for living on this earth. However, those who belong to Christ will be like Christ. Those people will also have spiritual bodies. Right now, people live and sin like Adam, and the bodies people have now will die. However, one day, believers will become like Christ, the person who belongs to heaven. Then believers will be ready for life with God!

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think of someone who looks like and acts in the same way as one of that person's parents. Why do you think they do this? What do you think causes the person to act in a similar way?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:42–49 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul compares our bodies with the way that God changes a seed into a plant. When people bury a body, it decays and is ugly and weak. God raises the dead believers and changes their bodies so that the believers' bodies are beautiful and strong and will never die.

In the second part: Paul explains how our bodies for living on earth came first, then spiritual bodies. God made the first person, Adam, with a body for living on this earth. Christ is the second kind of person. Christ is a life-giving spirit and has a spiritual body. While people now have earthly bodies, like Adam, believers will one day have spiritual bodies, like Christ.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Holy Spirit
- The Corinthian believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- God
- Adam, the first person
- And Christ

Remember, Paul is answering the question from the last part of Paul's letter about how God will raise dead bodies back to life. The Corinthians know that the Corinthians' bodies are weak and will decay after they die. In the last section, Paul explained that God creates different kinds of bodies, with different purposes. And when people plant a seed in the ground, God causes the seed to grow into a plant.

In the first part of this passage, Paul explains that God changes people's bodies in a beautiful and amazing way, just like God changes the seed. When people bury a body, that body is perishable. This means that the body dies and decays. However, God will raise each believer's body to a new kind of life and make that body imperishable. This means that the body will never die or decay.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What words or phrases in your language would you use for something that will die and does not last, like a flower or mist? What words or phrases would you use for something that will last forever? Pause this audio here.

When people bury a body, the body has no honor. In Paul's time, people did bury bodies respectfully, but if anyone touched a dead body in the wrong way, that person would be unclean. Also, people sin with their bodies and do dishonorable and shameful things. This body, then, is ugly and does not bring honor. However, God raises the body to life and makes it beautiful and full of honor.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How would you describe someone who acts in such a way that the person shames themselves? In contrast, think of someone who acts in such a way that the person honors God and their family. How would you describe this person? Pause this audio here.

Paul also says that when people bury a body, that body is weak. A person's body becomes tired, hurt, and loses strength. However, one day, God raises a believer's body to be strong.

While a believer lives on this earth, the believers' body is a natural body, or a body for living on earth. People bury the natural body and God raises it to life as a spiritual body. Paul does not mean that people will be like a spirit or ghost. Paul means that God's Spirit gives life to the new body. This body will be ready for life in heaven.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss what words or phrases you will use for a natural body and a spiritual or heavenly body. Pause this audio here.

In the second part, Paul explains how God first made natural bodies, or bodies for living on earth. Paul reminds the Corinthians of the story of how God made the earth. Paul says, "It is written," to show that Paul is quoting from the Scriptures, or God's word. Paul adds some explanation as Paul quotes to remind the Corinthians of the truth. Paul says that God created the first man, whose name was Adam, as a living being, or a human.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, what are some words or phrases you use to show that you are about to quote something, or to say what someone else has said? If you want to give more information about this quote, or explain the quote, how and when would you do this? Pause this audio here.

God created Adam out of dust, or soil in the ground, which is why Paul says Adam is from the dust, or soil, of the earth. Adam's body is just for living on this earth. Paul calls Adam the first Adam, or the first kind of man, since Adam's name means "man." Because of his sin, Adam's body was weak and one day died. All people are Adam's descendants and are like Adam, so everyone eventually dies as well.

However, Paul says there is a second Adam, or the second kind of man. Though Paul does not say Christ's name in this passage, we know that Paul is speaking about Christ. Christ is a life-giving spirit. This means that because God raised Christ back to life, Christ's spirit can give life to others. God raised Christ with a body for living in heaven. Christ's body does not decay but will live forever. His body is beautiful and strong. Paul says that the believers, or those who belong to Christ, will be like Christ. Believers will also have spiritual bodies when God raises the believers back to life.

All people have borne or carried the image of Adam, like they carry or wear clothes. This does not just mean that people's bodies look like Adam's body. To bear the likeness or image of someone means to be like that person. The inner part of us is like Adam, so we look and act and think like Adam. Later, believers will bear the image of the one who has come from heaven. We will be like Christ when God gives us all life again with our spiritual bodies.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to use drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, Paul's audience, God, Adam, and Christ.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, show how God took dirt and made it into Adam, the first person. Other people can stand near Adam to show how every person born on earth has been like Adam. Then show how God raised Christ to life. Christ's body is different than Adam's and everyone else's! A believer can show they belong to Christ by standing near Christ. Act out what happens when that believer dies. Show people burying that person's body, and think about how the body looks when it is in the ground. Then show how God raises the body back to life and how beautiful and strong that body is. The believer's body looks strong and beautiful, just like Christ's body!

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:42–49 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Holy Spirit
- The Corinthian believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- God
- Adam, the first person
- And Christ

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "A seed sprouts into a plant, and it will be the same when God raises the dead back to life. The body that people bury will decay, but when God raises the body back to life, it will never decay again. When people bury a body, it is dishonorable, but when God raises it back to life, it will be beautiful and full of honor. The body people bury is weak, but when God raises it back to life, it will be powerful and strong. Our bodies now are for living in this world, but when God raises our bodies, our bodies will be for living in heaven."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I know my body will one day die. I am sad when I think about the people I love who have died. I look forward to the day when our bodies will never die;" or
- "When we bury people, those people's bodies are no longer like they were when those people were alive. I am glad that God will change our bodies to make our bodies ready to live with God;" or
- "I feel how my body is weak and needs rest. When I am exhausted and worried about how I can keep working, I hope for the day when God will make our bodies strong and powerful."

Paul says, "Now we have bodies for living in this world, but then we will have bodies for living in heaven. So it says in the Scriptures, 'God gave the first person, Adam, life in his natural body for living in this world.' Jesus Christ is the last Adam, and Christ has a body for living in heaven. Christ brings people back to life. In the beginning, God gave people bodies for living in this world. In the future, God will give God's people bodies for living in heaven."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "People's bodies are weak and will one day die. But this is not what I want for my people. I want to give them good, strong, and beautiful bodies that will live forever;" or
- "I created Adam's body and it was good. However, when Adam sinned, Adam's body then had to die. I knew everything that would happen. Even then, I already planned to raise Christ to life with a heavenly body, which I would one day give to all believers;" or
- "I created everything, even people's bodies. I can and will take care of my people."

Paul says, "God created Adam, the first person, from the ground. Jesus Christ, the second kind of person, has a body for living in heaven. People who belong to this earth have bodies like Adam, the person that God made of earth. People who belong to heaven have bodies like Jesus, the person from heaven. And just as we have bodies like Adam, the earthly person, so we will have bodies like Christ, the heavenly person."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I know this is a difficult idea to understand, so I will take the time to explain it to the Corinthians. I do not want the Corinthians to believe a lie again because the Corinthians are still learning about God;" or
- "I want the Corinthians to trust God. If the Corinthians do, they will not have to worry about the future, since God has a good plan for their bodies;" or
- "I am so thankful that God has a good plan for us. God does not have to tell us what will happen in the future, but God does because he cares for us. I am glad that God is so kind like this!"

Ask the person playing Christ, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and I work together perfectly. We all have power and give life to people who believe in God;" or
- "I care for all people, and I want people to know me so I can give them new life. Then, one day, God will give the heavenly bodies that will never die, so people can be with us forever;" or
- "Just like all people, I know what it is like to have an earthly body, which is weak and dies. I can understand when people are hurting. As I live now, in my heavenly body, my spirit can give life to them."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:42–49 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Like God changes a seed into a plant, Paul says God will change our bodies at the **resurrection** of the dead. When Jesus returns to rule as king forever, the people whom God has accepted will become alive again and receive a new body—a body that will never die again! This event is the resurrection. For more information on resurrection, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for the resurrection of the dead as you used in previous passages.

Paul says that when people bury a body, that body is **perishable**, but God will raise the body to be **imperishable**. Something that is perishable can decay and die. Something that is imperishable will never die. Use the same word or phrase for perishable as you used in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **imperishable**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

When people bury a body, they bury it in **dishonor**, but God will raise the body to **glory**. Here, dishonor means that something is ugly and does not bring honor. Here, something that has glory means that it is beautiful and worthy of honor.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **dishonor**, as well as for **glory** or beauty. Remember that in the previous passage, you talked about how to translate glory when it means something that is beautiful and honorable. You may want to use that same word here. If you have already translated dishonor in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

When people bury a body, the body is a **natural** body, but God will raise the body as a **spiritual** body. A natural body is a body for living on this earth. Natural and sinful desires control this person and their body. A spiritual body is for living in heaven. The Spirit of God gives life to this body and leads it. Use the same word or phrase for spiritual as you used in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **natural**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that God made Adam, the first man, from the **dust**, or soil, of the earth. This dust was probably the top layer of the ground. It would have been more fine and drier than the soil lower in the ground.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **dust**. If you have translated Genesis, you may want to use the same word for the soil that you used in Genesis 2 when God created Adam. You may just want to use a general word for dirt or soil that is on the ground. Pause this audio here.

Paul says the second man, Christ, is a life-giving **spirit**. A person's spirit is the inner, invisible part of a person that continues to live in a person's spiritual body after the person's natural body dies. Christ has the heavenly or spiritual body and, because God raised Christ back to life, Christ's spirit can give a spiritual body to others. For more information on spirit, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for spirit as you used in previous passages.

Paul says that the second man, Christ, is of **heaven**, or from heaven. Here, heaven refers to the place where God lives with his angels. This heaven is not somewhere in this universe; it is not a place that humans can travel to. For more information on heaven, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for heaven as you used in previous passages.

Paul says just like we have **borne the image** of Adam, we will **bear the image** of Christ. An image is a picture of something. A photo, a painting, or a statue of a person is the image of a person. The image tells us something about what the person looks like, or what that person's character is like. This means that we have a body like Adam and a life like Adam. When we bear Christ's image, we will have a body and life like Christ's. This is different than the way people bear God's image, where we represent God and have qualities like God, but we do not look like God, since God is spirit. Some translations say "we will become like Christ" or "we will have bodies like Christ."

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "bear the image of." If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same phrase that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 15:42-49

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:50–58 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the last part of Paul's letter, Paul described how God will give the believers new, spiritual bodies like Christ. In this section, Paul strongly says that the believers must have these new bodies. Paul describes the incredible way that God defeats death at the end of the world. Since the believers know that God really will defeat death, Paul urges believers to continue to trust and work for the Lord.

To begin, Paul finishes up the discussion from the last part of Paul's letter. Paul has just said that God will give the believers new bodies that are ready for living in heaven. Here, Paul explains that this is necessary, because the believers cannot inherit, or live in, God's kingdom with the bodies that people have now. God's kingdom will never end, but people's bodies do. People's bodies of flesh and blood will decay. These bodies cannot share in God's kingdom, which lasts forever.

Paul knows this is confusing. People have been confused by what will happen at the end of the world for a long time! However, God has explained this mystery, or confusing secret, to Paul. Now Paul will explain the mystery to the Corinthians. Paul says that not all believers will die before Christ returns. But God will change every believer, both those who have already died and those who are still alive. God will give every believer a new body.

God will do this very quickly, faster even than people can blink their eyes! Paul explains how it will happen. One day, people will hear the sound of someone playing a musical instrument called a trumpet. A trumpet is a wind instrument. The musician blows into the trumpet to make a loud sound. When someone blew on a trumpet, they often wanted people to pay attention and gather together.

Stop here and look at a picture of a trumpet as a group. In your culture, how do people call others to gather together? What kind of loud instruments could you use to get someone's attention? Pause this audio here.

Then God will raise the dead believers back to life and give everyone a body that will never die. Paul says again that our bodies that will decay and die must change into bodies that cannot decay and die.

God talked about this day a long time ago to a man who wrote it down in the Scriptures. God said that God will defeat death, so people will no longer die. When God has changed our bodies, then that prophecy, or God's explanation about the future, will happen, just like God said it would!

Paul rejoices with words from another quote from the Scriptures. Again, God had told another man what God would do in the future. God uses special language and speaks to death as if death is a person. God says that death has not won the victory over us or God. Death certainly will not sting anyone again. Animals like insects and snakes sting, or bite people, and leave poison in a person's skin. However, death cannot sting or hurt people anymore because people will no longer die!

Stop here and discuss as a group: What are some animals in your area that sting or bite? Pause this audio here.

Paul quickly explains that people die because those people sin. People know they have sinned because God's law shows that people sin when they do follow that law. But now, God has freed people from sin's control

through what the Lord Christ Jesus has done. Paul is so full of joy that Paul wants to thank God, and Paul urges the other believers to thank God too!

Because God has and will do what he says he will, Paul urges the believers to continue to believe in God. Remember, when Paul started talking about how God raises the dead people to life, Paul reminded the Corinthians about when Paul first preached to the Corinthians. When they heard the truth, the Corinthians believed God and depended on God. Now, Paul urges the Corinthians to believe and depend like they did when the Corinthians first heard! Not only that, but the Corinthians should trust in God more and more. If God is the one who saves the Corinthians, the Corinthians should not move away or ignore God. Instead, the Corinthians should work hard for the Lord Jesus. Paul assures the Corinthians that working for the Lord is always valuable.

God really does raise people who are dead back to life, so the believers should do everything they can to tell others about this good news. Then others can also have the hope that God will raise them back to life to live with God!

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when you were excited about something that was going to happen and you wanted others to be with you when it happened.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:50–58 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four parts.

In the first part: Paul says that our bodies, which God made to live on earth, cannot live in God's kingdom. God's kingdom lasts forever, while our bodies decay and die.

In the second part: Paul describes how God will make us ready to live in God's kingdom. People will hear a trumpet sound. God will raise the dead back to life, and then God will immediately change all believers' bodies to be ready to live in God's kingdom. Paul says strongly that our bodies that can decay and die must change into bodies that cannot decay or die.

In the third part: God changes us, just like the prophecy from the Scriptures said will happen. God said in this prophecy that God will defeat death so that people will no longer die. Paul explains that people die because those people sin, and those people know they have sinned because of the law. But Paul celebrates that God has raised Christ from the dead so that people will no longer die forever.

In the fourth part: Because of all that God has done, the believers should trust more and more in God. They should not move away from God but always work hard for God. They can be sure that their work for the Lord Jesus is always valuable.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Holy Spirit
- The Corinthian believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- God
- And the Lord Jesus Christ

In the last part of his letter, Paul said that when God raises the dead back to life, God will give us all spiritual bodies, so that we will be like Christ.

In the first part of this section, Paul says that believers cannot live in God's kingdom with the bodies believers have now. Paul wants the Corinthians to understand how important this is. Paul calls the believers dear

brothers, or dear friends, to get their attention. Paul says, "I declare to you that this is really true." People's bodies are flesh and blood, or natural bodies, like Paul said in the last part of Paul's letter. These bodies will decay and die.

God's kingdom is the time and place when God will rule over everything and it lasts forever. God is already ruling over God's people, but here Paul is talking about when Jesus returns and God rules as king forever.

Paul says that our bodies that perish or die cannot inherit something that is imperishable, or that will last forever. Normally, inherit means to receive something after someone dies. Here, inherit means that God gives God's people the right to live in God's kingdom. But our bodies must change to be able to live in God's kingdom.

In the second part, Paul reminds the Corinthians that God does change our bodies to be ready for life in God's kingdom. Paul says, "Listen to what I am about to say!" Paul wants the believers to pay attention, because Paul will explain something important that was once a mystery. God has revealed this mystery to Paul. Now Paul will reveal the mystery to the Corinthians.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, what words or phrases do you use to get someone's attention? What do you say to show that you are talking about something important? Pause this audio here.

Paul describes what will happen at the end of the world. Paul explains that "we won't all sleep," meaning that believers do not have to die in order for God to change the believers' bodies. Some believers will still be alive. But God will change every believer, both those who are alive and those who have died.

Paul says it will happen like this: First, people will hear a trumpet sound. God will raise the dead to life and will change all believers immediately. Paul says that this will happen in a flash, or an instant. God will do this faster than a person can blink their eyes!

Stop here and look at a picture of a trumpet again as a group, as needed. Tell a story about a time when you saw something happen really fast, like a shooting star or a piece of grass that burned in a fire. Pay attention to the words or phrases you use to describe how quickly this happened. Pause this audio here.

Again, Paul repeats that the people's bodies that will die must become bodies that will not die. People's bodies are perishable and mortal, which means that the bodies will decay and die. God must give people new bodies, like a person puts new clothes on someone else. God will make these bodies immortal and imperishable, so the bodies will never die or decay.

In part three, Paul explains that God said long ago that God would stop people from dying. A long time ago, God told two different people to write down two prophecies, or what God said would happen in the future. These prophecies will come true or will happen when people's bodies are imperishable and immortal. God uses special language in these two prophecies. Paul starts the first one by saying, "It is written," which is a common way to introduce when someone is quoting Scripture that someone wrote. God talks to death like it is a person, God's enemy. God says God will swallow up death in victory. This means that God defeats death, so people will never again have to die.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Think about when you swallow some food and it is completely gone. You cannot see the food anymore, and that piece of food will never appear again. What are some words or phrases that you would use in your language to describe how something is completely gone? Pause this audio here.

Paul then says the second prophecy from another part of the Scriptures. Again, God talks to death like it is a person and asks death two questions. God does not expect death to answer. Instead, God makes a strong statement that death cannot win or harm anyone. Paul quotes this second prophecy to make that strong statement too. In this prophecy, God says that death certainly does not win, so people will no longer die. God also says that death certainly will not sting anyone again. Animals like insects and snakes sting, or bite people. But God defeats death, so death will no longer have the power to hurt people.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Think of a dangerous thing, like a wild animal or a steep mountain. How would you describe that dangerous thing? What would you compare that thing to in order to help someone understand how dangerous that thing is? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you include these prophecies in your translation? How will you show that these are special sayings, or prophecies? Pause this audio here.

Paul pauses to explain what Paul means by death's sting and power. Sin is like the poison from a sting that causes people to die. And it is the law that makes sin powerful. This is the Law that God gave to Moses. This law is good, but the law shows people when they sin, or disobey God. When people disobey God and break God's law, they must one day die as punishment.

But, Paul says, God has freed us from this punishment! God has raised Jesus Christ, our Lord or master, back to life, so God has shown that God has defeated death. And God will one day raise us back to life, so we no longer lose to death and die forever. Paul says we should thank God for the way God has won this victory for all believers!

In the fourth part, Paul urges the believers to live like this is true. When the believers heard the good news, the believers took their stand, or depended on the good news. The believers trusted the good news was true, and the believers depended on it, like the believers trust and depend on a firm and safe place to stand. Paul tells the believers to stand firm, or continue to trust and depend on the good news!

Paul calls the Corinthians "dear friends" to show again how much Paul cares about the Corinthians. Paul really wants the Corinthians to have a good relationship with God! So Paul urges the believers to stay close to God, like you would stay close to a good friend! Paul says that the believers should give themselves fully to God's work. Paul means that the believers should work hard and focus on serving God. Paul encourages the believers that the Lord Jesus will make sure that the believers' work is not in vain or useless.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to use drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, the believers, God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, remember that Paul is telling the Corinthian believers what God will one day do. Pick a piece of clothing, like a hat, to represent our bodies that do not last. These bodies cannot live with God forever! Paul says, "Listen! I will tell you a great secret!" Show how people hear the trumpet and God raises the dead back to life. Show how God takes the earthly body, like old clothing. Then God gives all believers a new body, like new clothing. This body will last forever! Show how God defeats death so that it can no longer hurt people. Show how God raised Christ back to life. Then thank God for raising Christ and defeating death! Show how the Corinthians should depend on the good news like they depend on a safe place to stand. The believers should stand near to Jesus as they work for Jesus.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:50–58 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Holy Spirit
- The Corinthian believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- God
- And the Lord Jesus Christ

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "Dear friends, pay attention to this: Our flesh-and-blood bodies cannot live in the place where God rules. Things that decay cannot live in the place where nothing will decay. Listen to this. I will tell you something that you do not know. We believers will not all die, but God will change all of us. This will happen in one moment, like a single blink of an eye, when people hear the final trumpets. For we will hear the sound of someone blowing a trumpet, and God will raise those who have died and give those people eternal life. Then God will change all of us. God will change our bodies into new bodies."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I have heard people say different things about how the world will end, and I was confused. I am glad that God has revealed to Paul what will really happen;" or
- "I am thankful that God will change our bodies so we can live forever with God. It would be so sad if our bodies still became weak and died, so that we could not live with God forever;" or
- "I am excited for the day when God will raise all believers back to life and give us new bodies!"

Paul says, "For our bodies that can decay must change into bodies that cannot decay. And our bodies that die must change into bodies that live forever. When our bodies that can decay have changed into bodies that cannot decay, and our bodies that die have changed into bodies that live forever, then what is written in the Scriptures will happen:

'God has defeated death. His people will no longer die.'

'Death has not won the victory.'

'Death can no longer hurt people.'

People die because those people sin, and those people know they have sinned because of the law. But let us thank God that we will never die again because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I was not worried or wondering if I would be able to defeat death. I always knew that I would stop people from dying and give people new bodies;" or
- "I know everything that will happen, so I am not surprised with how people act. Even though I know people will sin against me, I will still make a way for them to be with me;" or
- "I care for my people and want to reassure my people when they live in crazy or hard times. I will tell my people about the future, so my people can trust that I am in control."

Paul says, "Dear brothers and sisters, you should therefore firmly believe in God. Do not move away from God. Always work hard for the Lord. You can be sure that working for the Lord is always valuable."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I really do care for the believers in Corinth. I know I have been telling the believers hard and confusing things, so I will remind them twice that they are like my family. I want to help the believers!" or
- "People who believe that something will happen will act in a certain way. If you believe it will rain later, you will prepare for the rain. I want the believers to act like they believe that God will defeat death and change their bodies!" or
- "The Corinthian believers became confused about how God raises people back to life because they did not know God. I want the believers to stay close to God so that they will not be confused again!"

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 15:50–58 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul calls the believers in Corinth "**brothers**." Since God is the Father of all believers, all believers are like brothers and sisters. So Paul frequently uses the word for brother when referring to a fellow believer. When there is more than one brother, the word can also mean brothers and sisters. Use the same words or phrases for brothers, or brothers and sisters, as you used in previous passages.

Paul says that people with natural or human bodies, or **flesh** and **blood**, cannot inherit the **kingdom of God**. Flesh and blood together is another way to say "a natural body," because a natural body is made up of blood, and flesh, or the soft parts of the body. Paul and others sometimes just said "flesh and blood" to talk about the natural body of a person.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will talk about "flesh and blood," or the natural body. Use the same words or phrases for flesh and blood as you have used in previous passages. Pause this audio here.

Right now, the **kingdom of God** is everywhere where God rules, and where people are obeying God and live in a right relationship with God. Here, though, Paul is specifically talking about how God will rule everything when Jesus returns to earth and God raises the dead believers back to life. In God's perfect kingdom there will be no more suffering or evil, and all people and all creation will obey God. For more information on kingdom of God, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for "kingdom of God" as you used in previous passages.

People with earthly bodies cannot **inherit** the kingdom of God. When you inherit, you receive a thing or a right from someone else. So here, this means that people with earthly bodies cannot receive the right to live in God's kingdom. Use the same word or phrase for inherit as you used in previous passages.

Paul says that our **perishable** bodies cannot inherit something that is **imperishable**. Something that is perishable can decay and die. Something that is imperishable will never die. Use the same words or phrases for perishable and imperishable as you used in previous passages.

Paul tells the Corinthians to listen! Paul is going to tell the Corinthians a **mystery**. A mystery is something that people did not know before, but now God has revealed this thing to people. Use the same word for mystery that you used in previous passages.

At the end of the world, people will hear someone blowing on a **trumpet**. A trumpet is a long, straight wind instrument which people often made out of silver. The musician blows into the trumpet to make a loud sound. Use the same word for trumpet as you used in previous passages in 1 Corinthians.

Stop here and look at a picture of a trumpet again as a group, as needed. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the **mortal** bodies must change to be **immortal**. Something that is mortal will die. Something that is immortal will never die.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **mortal** and **immortal**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use those same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul explains that people die because of **sin**. Sin is an act of rebellion against God. Anytime that a person disobeys God's laws, that person sins. For more information on sin, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for sin as you used in previous passages.

Paul explains that people know that they have sinned because of the **law**. The law is the set of instructions that God has given the people of Israel. For more information on law, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for law as you used in previous passages.

Paul calls Jesus **Christ** and **Lord**. Christ is the same as the word "Messiah," which refers to the special king and Savior that God had promised to send. A lord is a master over other people, who has full authority. For more information on Christ and Lord, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same words or phrases for Christ and Lord as you used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 15:50–58

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 16:1–4

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 16:1–4 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:1–4 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:1–4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this part of Paul's letter, Paul responds to another question from the Corinthians' previous letter to Paul. Paul gives practical instructions on how the believers should organize a collection of money to support God's people, or the believers, in Jerusalem. Paul explains how the believers should gather the money, where to keep the money, and who should deliver the money as a gift to the believers in Jerusalem. Paul concludes by saying that, if it is appropriate or needed, Paul will travel with the Corinthians to deliver the money.

Apparently, the Corinthian believers had said something to Paul about how the believers should raise money to help the saints in Jerusalem. Saints, or God's people, are people who God has set apart as special for God. At the time Paul was writing Paul's letter to the Corinthians, the believers in Jerusalem were very poor. People treated the believers unfairly for being followers of Jesus. Some believers in Jerusalem lost their jobs. Most believers in Jerusalem were from a Jewish background, and Jewish people who were not followers of Jesus excluded the believers from the Jewish community. So the believers in Jerusalem were alone and in need. Now Paul is talking to the Corinthians about how Paul was collecting money from the churches that Paul had started around the world to help the believers in Jerusalem. Paul wants the churches to care about each other and be united as one community. Paul had recently travelled through Galatia on Paul's way to Ephesus and had given the believers in Galatia the same instructions as Paul gives to the believers in Corinth. Galatia was a region of the Roman Empire. This region is now the country of Turkey.

Stop here and look at a map of Galatia and Ephesus as a group. Pause this audio here.

Paul explains to the Corinthians how the Corinthians should organize the collection for the believers in Jerusalem. Paul encourages the Corinthians to set aside some of their income, or money, on the first day of each week, which was a Sunday. The Corinthians should keep the money the Corinthians are setting aside in their homes. Paul encourages the believers to set aside money each week based on what the believers can afford. This means that there was not a set amount that everyone had to put aside, which would be difficult for someone who had less money than other people. Paul wants the believers to give an appropriate amount of money according to what they have or earn. Paul does not want the believers to feel pressured to give large amounts of money all at once, but to set aside money steadily over time. Paul also wants to make sure the believers gather the money to be ready for when Paul arrives in Corinth.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: Talk about a time when you needed to save money for something important. How did you organise putting aside that money? How did you keep it safe? How did you feel when you had saved the amount you needed? Pause this audio here.

Paul encourages the believers to choose trustworthy people from the believers' own community to deliver the money to Jerusalem. The people who will deliver the money should be people all the Corinthian believers approve of. The believers should choose people the believers can trust and who are responsible and reliable. Paul says when he arrives in Corinth, Paul will send the people the believers choose to Jerusalem with the money. Paul will write a letter to the believers in Jerusalem to introduce the believers from Corinth who will travel there. In that time, people introduced other people they trusted by writing a letter to explain who the people were. Paul also offers to travel with the Corinthian believers if the believers needed or wanted Paul to.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What are some needs people have in your community? How do people in your community look after the people with these needs? When you give your time, money, or resources to others, how do you think it helps to build unity and trust in a community?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:1–4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul starts a new subject about collecting money to help believers in Jerusalem. The believers in Jerusalem were very poor and were being treated unfairly. Paul tells the Corinthians to collect money to support these believers, just as Paul has told the believers in Galatia to do.

In the second part: Paul gives practical instructions and explains how the believers should collect money. Paul encourages the believers to set aside some of the believers' income every week and save it until Paul arrives in Corinth.

In the third part: Paul tells the believers they should choose people the believers trust from the believers' own community to carry the money to Jerusalem. Paul will write a letter of introduction for whoever the believers select. Paul also offers to travel with them if necessary.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers
- The believers in Jerusalem
- And the people who will deliver the money

In this part of his letter, Paul starts a new subject. Paul wants to talk about the need to raise money to support the saints, or God's people, in Jerusalem. Some translations say "in Jerusalem" here, but the original letter does not mention Jerusalem, because the believers in Corinth would have already known about this collection and who the collection was for. Paul is giving practical guidance for how the believers in Corinth should collect the money and take it to Jerusalem. Collection is not a tax or something the believers had to do. In this context, a collection is when people willingly give money to help other people. This collection is a gift or blessing for the believers in Jerusalem. The believers in Jerusalem were struggling because these believers were poor and people were treating them badly. Paul wants the believers in other cities, like Corinth, to support the believers in Jerusalem. Paul says the instructions Paul gives to the Corinthian believers are the same instructions as Paul gave to the believers in Galatia. Paul had travelled through Galatia on Paul's way to Ephesus, where Paul is now.

Stop here and look at a map of Galatia and Ephesus again as a group, if needed. Pause this audio here.

In the second part of the passage, Paul gives clear instructions on how the believers should set aside money for the collection. Paul asks the believers to put aside some money on the first day of each week, which was Sunday for the Jewish people. When Paul says, "each of you," Paul likely means each household should collect some money. The believers should set aside money each week and keep it safely at home until Paul arrives. Paul encourages the believers to set aside an amount based on what they have. If someone earned a lot of money in one week, that person should set aside more; if that person earned less, they should set aside a smaller amount. Paul stresses that the money the believers give should be something the believers can afford. Paul wants the believers to do this regularly so that when Paul arrives, all the money will be ready, and Paul will not have to organize a last-minute collection.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Paul helps the believers by giving clear and practical instructions. Think about a time when you followed simple, step-by-step instructions, and those instructions helped you with a task. How do you think practical advice like this can make it easier to stay committed to helping others? Pause this audio here.

In the third part of the passage, Paul talks about what will happen when Paul arrives in Corinth and how the believers should take the money to Jerusalem. Paul gives the Corinthian believers the responsibility of choosing someone the believers know who the believers can trust from their own community to take the money to Jerusalem. The believers may raise a large amount of money, so the people the believers choose would travel to Jerusalem with a large amount of money. The believers should therefore choose people who are known to be honest and trustworthy and who would not take any of the money for themselves. These people should also be people who are responsible and careful. Paul does not say if the people should be men or women, but it is likely that it would be men that would deliver the money to Jerusalem. The journey from Corinth to Jerusalem was 1,300 kilometres. It would take several weeks to travel by sea and by land.

Stop here and look at a map of the journey from Corinth to Jerusalem as a group. Also discuss the following question: How do you decide if a person is trustworthy or responsible to do an important task in your own community? How will you say that the believers approve of these people who will take the money to Jerusalem? Pause this audio here.

Paul says Paul will write a letter to introduce or recommend the believers from Corinth who will take the money to the believers in Jerusalem. Paul even offers to travel with these people if the people of Corinth think it is good and right for Paul to do so. Paul wants to make the believers look after the money carefully and honestly. Paul wants the believers to work together and be responsible for the money they collect. Paul asks the believers in different cities to support the believers in Jerusalem so they are united as part of the bigger community of believers who should love and support each other.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and its actions. Choose people to set aside money and then bring everyone together to decide who they can trust to deliver the money. Have that person deliver that money to a group who are representing the believers in Jerusalem. Think about how important it is to work together and to help the other believers.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:1–4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers
- The believers in Jerusalem
- And the people who will deliver the money

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am trying to make sure all the churches are working together and helping the believers in Jerusalem who need help;" or
- "I care about the people in Jerusalem and want everyone to help them, not just one church."

Paul says, "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money and keep it safe at home, in keeping with your income. Then everything will be ready when I come."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want the believers to give regularly so that the money will be ready by the time I arrive;" or
- "I am trying to be fair. I want everyone to give what they can afford, no matter if that person is rich or poor."

Ask the person playing a believer in Corinth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might say:

- "I am glad that Paul is not asking me to give more than I can afford;" or
- "It feels good to help others, but it is hard to think about giving money every week."

Paul says, "Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send those men with your gift to Jerusalem."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I want to make sure the money gets to Jerusalem safely. That is why I am asking the believers to choose someone they trust;" or
- "I want the Corinthians to be involved in choosing who will deliver the money, so they feel responsible for their giving."

Ask the person playing a believer in Corinth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "It is good that we get to choose who will take the money to Jerusalem;" or
- "I want to make sure we pick someone responsible and trustworthy to deliver the money;" or
- "I am glad that Paul trusts us to make this decision and is not telling us who we should send."

Paul says, "If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am willing to go with them if necessary to make sure the money is delivered properly;" or
- "I want the Corinthians to know that I am serious about this collection and that I am ready to help however I can."

Ask the person playing a believer in Corinth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am glad to know that Paul is willing to go himself, if needed;" or
- "I trust Paul, and it would be good to have Paul help deliver the money."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul writes to the believers in Corinth about supporting the **saints** in Jerusalem. Saints means the holy people. These are people who belong to God because they are believers or followers of Jesus. Use the same word or phrase for saints as you have in previous passages. For more information about saints, look up saint in the Master Glossary.

Paul says the instructions Paul gives to the Corinthians is the same as the instructions Paul gave to the **churches** of Galatia. In the Bible, the word church is never used to mean a building. Instead, the word church means a community of people who believe in Jesus. Sometimes the word church is used for a group of believers in one particular place, and sometimes the word means all the people on earth together who believe in Jesus. Use the same word or phrase for churches as you have in previous passages. For more information about churches, look up church in the Master Glossary.

Paul says the believers should choose people they trust to take the money to the believers in **Jerusalem**. Jerusalem is the name of the most important city of the Jewish people. Jerusalem was part of the province called Judea.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Jerusalem**. Look up Jerusalem in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 16:5-12

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 16:5-12 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:5-12 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:5-12 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the last part of Paul's letter, Paul gave instructions about the money that the Corinthians were collecting for the believers in Jerusalem. Now Paul will discuss some of Paul's own travel plans. Paul's friend, Timothy, is currently on his way to Corinth, so Paul asks the Corinthians to treat Timothy kindly. Then Paul explains that Apollos, another believer, will not visit Corinth at this time.

In this section, Paul talks about Paul's travel plans. Paul wants to come visit the believers in Corinth. Paul may have written this letter from Ephesus, probably in March or April. Paul plans to travel through the region of Macedonia, probably visiting churches along the way. A person traveling over land from Ephesus to Corinth would normally go through Macedonia.

Stop here and look at a map of the journey from Ephesus to Corinth through Macedonia. Pause this audio here.

Paul is not sure how long he can stay with the believers in Corinth. Paul may stay in Corinth through the winter time, or the cold season, because it would be difficult to travel during that time. Though Paul is not sure where he will go after Corinth, the Corinthians can help Paul prepare for Paul's next journey. During that time, believers would often provide food and money to other believers who were traveling. Also, believers would often find someone else for them to travel with, to make sure everyone would arrive safely. In this culture, people thought hospitality, or caring for guests and travelers, was very important. When Paul was last in Corinth, Paul had refused to accept any money from the believers. Now though, Paul says he will let the Corinthian believers help Paul, so they can show their care for Paul.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do you treat guests who stay with you? How do you help those guests or care for them? Pause this audio here.

Paul is not sure about his plans, but Paul wants to spend a long time in Corinth. If Paul can only come for a short visit in the near future, then Paul would rather wait and come later when he could stay a long time. Paul says that the Lord is in control of Paul's plans though, so Paul may have to change his plans.

Right now, Paul plans to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost. Pentecost is a Jewish festival or religious celebration. People usually celebrate Pentecost during late May or early June. Paul is going to stay because God has given Paul a great opportunity in Ephesus. There are many people who want to hear the good news! However, there are also many people who want Paul to stop preaching the good news. Paul knows he can share the good news with both!

Then Paul talks about Timothy. Paul has plans for Timothy to arrive in Corinth soon, but Paul is worried for Timothy. Some of the Corinthians are angry at Paul, and Timothy is Paul's friend. Paul thinks that because of this, the Corinthians might not treat Timothy in a friendly way. Paul asks the Corinthians to treat Timothy kindly, instead of with hate, because Timothy is serving the Lord, just like Paul is.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when you introduced or sent your friend to meet another group of people that you knew. How did you want that group of people to treat your friend? What did you do to make sure your friend felt comfortable and safe in the new group? What did you tell the group of people about your friend? Pause this audio here.

After Timothy visits the Corinthians, Timothy plans to travel back to Paul. Paul asks the Corinthians to help Timothy prepare for Timothy's journey back to Paul with food and supplies. Paul also asks the Corinthians to send Timothy on Timothy's way in peace. When people left each other, they would say a traditional blessing or goodbye of "Go in peace." Paul asks the Corinthians to give Timothy the Corinthians' blessing to show that there is peace between the believers and Timothy.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do people say goodbye to each other? What do people do and say? Why do people do this? Pause this audio here.

Then Paul talks about Apollos' plans. Remember, Apollos was a believer and a leader who had taught in Corinth. The Corinthians had probably written a letter to ask Apollos to visit the Corinthians. Some Corinthian believers had caused problems when these believers said they followed Apollos and did not agree with anyone who followed another leader like Paul.

Paul shows that Paul and Apollos worked together instead of competing with each other. Paul calls Apollos Paul's brother, a fellow believer in Christ. Paul and Apollos are not fighting or jealous of each other. Paul even urged Apollos to go with some other believers to Corinth. However, Paul says that Apollos chose not to visit at this time. Apollos hoped to visit the Corinthians at some future time that would be better for Apollos.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:5–12 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul describes Paul's plans. Paul will stay in Ephesus until early spring, because there are many people to tell the good news to. Then Paul plans to travel through Macedonia to Corinth. Paul hopes to stay a long time with the Corinthians, if that is what the Lord wants Paul to do.

In the second part: Paul urges the Corinthians to treat Timothy in a kind way when Timothy arrives. Paul asks the Corinthians to help and give Timothy what he needs when Timothy leaves Corinth to return to Paul.

In the third part: Paul explains Apollos' plans. Though Paul has urged Apollos to visit Corinth, Apollos will not come now. Apollos hopes to visit the Corinthians another time.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- The Lord Jesus
- Timothy
- Other believers who are traveling
- And Apollos

In the last part of Paul's letter, Paul talked about how the Corinthians should gather money for other believers as the Corinthians prepare for Paul's visit. Now in this section, Paul will talk about Paul's plans to travel to Corinth, as well as Timothy and Apollos' plans. Paul would often talk about travel plans at the end of a letter.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Pretend you are planning a trip to visit some friends in a different town. How would you tell those friends about your plans? Describe to the group how you plan to get to that town and how long you would stay. What other information would you tell them? Pause this audio here.

In the first part of this section of Paul's letter, Paul talks about Paul's own plans. Paul may be in the town of Ephesus as he writes. God is giving Paul good opportunities to speak about the good news there. Paul says it is like God opened a door, so Paul can walk through it to speak about the good news in new places.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when God gave you a good opportunity. What words or phrases would you use to describe how God did this? Pause this audio here.

Paul also says that people are opposing Paul. These people do not want Paul to talk about the good news. But these people cannot stop Paul! Paul wants to stay in Ephesus and teach until the Pentecost festival. People celebrate this festival in late May or early June. Instead of a specific day, people would often say, "I am doing something near the time of this festival," since people knew when the festivals would happen. Paul may have wanted to celebrate this festival or may have used the festival to talk about the time of the year.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you talk about different times of the year? What events or seasons would you talk about to describe when you are going to do something? Pause this audio here.

Then, Paul plans to travel over land to Corinth. Paul will go through the region of Macedonia, which is in the northern part of Greece. Paul probably plans to visit and stay with believers along the way. If Paul does, Paul may then arrive in Corinth closer to winter time, or when the weather becomes cold in that part of the world. Paul wants to stay a long time in Corinth when Paul comes. Paul would like to stay the whole winter time, when

it would be dangerous to travel anyways. Then the Corinthians can help and prepare Paul for Paul's next trip. Paul is not sure where Paul will go after Corinth, but no matter where Paul goes, Paul will need food and supplies.

Stop here and look at the map of the journey from Ephesus to Corinth through Macedonia. Pause this audio here.

In the second part, Paul talks about Timothy. Paul has already sent Timothy to Corinth, like Paul said in an earlier passage. Paul does not know when Timothy will arrive. Timothy is going to Corinth to remind the believers of what the believers should be doing. Paul knows that some Corinthians might be upset about what Timothy says, so Paul is worried that people may treat Timothy badly. Paul asks that whenever Timothy does arrive, that the Corinthians would not do anything that would cause Timothy to fear. Paul reminds the Corinthians that Timothy is working for the Lord, just like Paul is. So the Corinthians should treat Timothy with respect instead of with hate or disrespect.

Paul asks that the Corinthians send Timothy on Timothy's way in peace when Timothy leaves Corinth to return to Paul. Paul wants the Corinthians to give Timothy the traditional blessing of peace. Paul cares about Timothy and wants Timothy's entire time with the Corinthians to be peaceful! Paul will be waiting for Timothy and his companions. Paul calls these companions "brothers," meaning fellow believers. This was probably a group of men who would be traveling with Timothy.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Remember your discussion in step two about how you say goodbye to people in your culture. How will you talk about the Corinthians giving Timothy a blessing of peace as Timothy leaves? Pause this audio here.

In the third part, Paul talks about Apollos' decision. Paul also calls Apollos "our brother." Apollos is not literally Paul's brother, but Apollos is a fellow believer in Jesus Christ. Paul is showing that Apollos is a friend and serves the Lord like Paul does.

The Corinthians had probably sent a letter or message that asked Apollos to come visit Corinth. Paul did urge Apollos to go with some other brothers, or fellow believers, who are coming to Corinth. These brothers may be the group traveling with Timothy, or the group taking this letter to Corinth. However, Apollos decided that this was not a good time for a trip. Apollos does hope to visit the Corinthians at some future time that would be better for Apollos.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to use drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, the believers, Timothy, Apollos, the other believers who are traveling, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, remember that Paul is talking about traveling to different places. You can pick different areas in the room to represent the different cities Paul is talking about. When Paul talks about the good opportunities in Ephesus, show how some people are listening, while others try to stop Paul from teaching. Show how Paul plans to visit believers in Macedonia on Paul's way to Corinth. Show Timothy traveling to Corinth. Show how the believers should welcome Timothy kindly. Then when Timothy plans to travel back to Paul, show how the believers give Timothy food and supplies for Timothy's trip. Show the companions who travel with Timothy.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:5-12 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Corinthian believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- The Lord Jesus
- Timothy
- Other believers who are traveling
- And Apollos

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "I am going to travel through the region of Macedonia, and then I will visit you. I do plan to pass through Macedonia. If it is possible, I will stay with you for some time, perhaps until the cold season is finished. Then you can give me the things I need for my next trip, wherever I go next. I want to visit you for a long time, longer than I am able to stay right now. If the Lord will let me, I hope to have a long visit. But first I will stay at Ephesus until the festival of Pentecost. I will stay here because I am able to speak to many people about the Lord here. Also there are many people here who do not want me to preach."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Corinthian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I hope Paul can stay a long time when Paul visits. I have a lot of questions to ask Paul, and I know others will too!" or
- "I hope Paul has a safe journey. I worry about Paul and other believers when they travel. I want to help them and give them food for their trip. If I am traveling to the same place, I will travel with Paul or another believer. Then we can protect and care for each other as we travel;" or
- "I am nervous about what Paul will say when Paul visits. In this letter, Paul has pointed out several ways that we need to change our way of thinking and acting. I hope Paul will be glad to see what we are doing when Paul comes."

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I care about the Corinthian believers and would love to spend a long time with them. I want to hear about the believers' lives and share meals with them. I want to worship and learn about God with the believers!" or
- "I am excited about the opportunities God has given to me to share the gospel. When people try to stop me, I still try to tell those people the good news too. If those people are near me, they can still hear me teach them, even if they do not want to listen!" or
- "I try to make good plans. However, I know the Lord's plans are the best. I will trust the Lord if the Lord says he has a better plan for what I should do."

Paul says, "Whenever Timothy reaches you, do not make him afraid to work with you. Timothy is working for the Lord, the same as I am. So no one should treat Timothy as unimportant. When Timothy comes back to me, give Timothy the things he needs for his trip. Give Timothy your blessing of peace as he leaves. I hope Timothy will return to me soon, along with his companions."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am worried for Timothy. Timothy is going to have to explain many difficult and important things to the Corinthians. I know people can be mean when they are confused or embarrassed;" or
- "I care about Timothy. I do not want anyone to treat Timothy with disrespect or unkindness. I do not want anyone to make Timothy's work harder, since Timothy is already working hard for the Lord;" or
- "I trust Timothy to teach and help the Corinthians. I rely on Timothy a lot! I am glad Timothy is visiting the Corinthians, but I will also be glad when Timothy returns to me!"

Ask the person playing Timothy, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am nervous about this trip. I do not know how the Corinthians will treat me when I arrive;" or
- "I am thankful that Paul cares for me and is trying to make my trip easier;" or
- "Even if people are not kind to me, I trust in the Lord. I know that the Lord will give me the strength to do the Lord's work, just like he always has."

Paul says, "As for our brother Apollos, I strongly encouraged Apollos to go to you along with the other brothers. Apollos does not want to go at this time, but Apollos will visit you when he has a chance."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Apollos, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I know that the Corinthians are confused about which leader the believers follow. We believers follow Christ, not people! I do not want the believers to be confused if I visit now;" or
- "God has work for me to do where I am now, so I will not go to Corinth at this time;" or
- "I care about the Corinthian believers and I do want to visit them! I will see if there is another time that would be good for me to visit Corinth."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:5–12 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul hopes to stay for a long while with the Corinthians, if the **Lord** allows. A lord is a master over other people, who has full authority. In this case, Paul is probably talking about the Lord Jesus. For more information on Lord, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Lord as you used in previous passages.

Paul plans to stay in Ephesus until **Pentecost**. Pentecost refers to a holy day for the Jews. It means "fiftieth." It is the Greek name for the Feast of Weeks that God instructed Moses to celebrate, 50 days after the Passover festival.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Pentecost**. Look up Pentecost in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul asks the Corinthians to give Timothy their blessing of **peace**. This word for peace means both an absence of conflict and fullness, or completeness, of life. For more information on peace, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for peace as you used in previous passages.

Paul hopes Timothy will return safely with the other **brothers**. Since God is the Father of all believers, all believers are like brothers and sisters. So Paul frequently uses the word for brother when referring to a fellow believer. Use the same words or phrases for brothers as you used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 16:5-12

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 16:13-18

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 16:13-18 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:13-18 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:13–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the last part of Paul's letter, Paul talked about his own plans to visit Corinth. Then Paul talked about Timothy and Apollos' travel plans. In this section, Paul gives the church some final general instructions. Then Paul talks about Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and others like them who serve God's people.

Paul begins this passage by giving the Corinthians five big commands.

First, Paul commands the believers to be on guard. Paul may be telling the believers to be ready for Christ to return to judge the world. Part of being ready for Christ to come back means that the believers should watch out for all the sins that the believers might be tempted to do and that Paul warned the believers about earlier in this letter.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who was on guard, or watching out, in case an enemy attacked. What kinds of things did that person do in order to be ready for whatever would happen next? Pause this audio here.

Second, Paul says to stand firm in the faith, or to keep following Christ. The believers should stand strong, and not fall, or sin, by worshiping false gods or sinning in other ways.

Third, Paul says to be courageous, or brave. Earlier in Paul's letter, Paul wrote that many of the Corinthian believers were boasting, and many were not following God's laws. Paul wants the Corinthian believers to know that the believers should be brave and follow God even when others around the believers are not following God correctly. So here, Paul may be thinking of a psalm in the Old Testament which says to trust in the Lord and to be strong and courageous, because the Lord protects people who follow the Lord, but the Lord shames people who are proud.

Fourth, Paul says to be strong. Paul does not mean that the believers should be physically strong. Paul is using special language to warn the believers not to give in to temptation to sin. You will remember that many people in Corinth worshiped idols, were sexually immoral, and did other things God hates. Because the culture in Corinth would pressure the believers to do these things too, Paul is warning the believers to be spiritually strong like a man who fights against an enemy and does not lose that fight.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who continued to do what that person knew was right even when others decided to do something wrong. Now tell about a person who followed what other people were doing even though that person knew it was the wrong thing to do. Pause this audio here.

Fifth, Paul tells the believers to show love in everything the believers do. You will remember that earlier in Paul's letter, Paul said that while love builds up, knowledge puffs up, or makes people proud. So Paul is telling the believers to show love in everything the believers do instead of acting like the believers are more wise than anyone else.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who thought that person was better than other people. What kinds of things did that person do? Now tell a story about someone who did everything with love for others. What kinds of things did that person do? Pause this audio here.

Most likely, Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus were the people who brought the Corinthians' letter to Paul from Corinth. These men would most likely be the ones to take Paul's letter back to the Corinthians. This means that the Corinthians know Stephanas and his household, because Stephanas lived in Corinth and was a part of the Corinthian church. A household might include slaves and servants as well as the members of a person's family. Stephanas and his household were the first people to believe in Christ in Achaia. Achaia was a province, or larger region of the country of Greece, and Corinth was the capital city of Achaia.

Stop here and look at a map of Greece as a group. Find Achaia Province and the city of Corinth on the map. Pause this audio here.

Paul says Stephanas and Stephanas' household have devoted, or given, themselves to serving God's people, who Paul calls the saints. Paul urges, or strongly asks, the believers to submit themselves to people like Stephanas and his household by following those peoples' leadership. Paul says to also obey or respect everyone like these people who work hard in God's work.

Paul says Paul was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus arrived to visit Paul. We are not sure who Fortunatus and Achaicus were. These were common names at this time, especially among slaves or people who had been slaves. Therefore, Fortunatus and Achaicus may have been part of Stephanas' household, or they may have just been other men from the church in Corinth.

Paul says the reason Paul was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus arrived was because these men supplied what was lacking from the church in Corinth. Paul means that Paul was encouraged because seeing Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus was like having the whole church come to visit Paul. Although Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus told Paul about the problems in the Corinthian church that Paul then wrote about in this letter, these men also would have shared good news about the believers. So Paul says this visit refreshed Paul's spirit, and Paul says the visit refreshed the Corinthian church's spirit too, or made the church joyful. Paul says this because Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus were able to take Paul's letter back to the Corinthian church.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell about a time when a good friend or family member you had not seen in a long time came from far away to visit you. Describe how you felt when you saw them. Pause this audio here.

Finally, Paul tells the believers to recognize people like Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus. Paul means the believers should pay attention to, and listen to, people like these men, who humbly serve the church by doing God's work. Before, Paul had warned the believers not to honor or follow people because of how wise those people were, how rich they were, or how important they were. But now Paul is showing the believers the kind of people the believers should be following.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:13–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul gives the Corinthian church five big commands: First, be on guard. Second, stand firm in the faith. Third, be courageous. Fourth, be strong. Fifth, show love in everything you do.

In the second part: Paul talks about Stephanas and Stephanas' household, who were the first believers in Achaia and who have served God's people. Paul strongly asks the believers to submit to the leadership of Stephanas and Stephanas' household. Paul also says that Paul was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus came to visit Paul, because this visit refreshed Paul's spirit and the Corinthian church's spirit too. Finally, Paul says the church should honor people like these men.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The church in Corinth
- Stephanas' household
- Stephanas
- Fortunatus
- And Achaicus

First, think about this part of Paul's letter as a whole. Remember that Paul has been writing this letter to the church in Corinth to correct several problems. Some of the church's main problems are sexual immorality and idol worship, as well as pride and divisions about spiritual wisdom. In this passage, Paul will give the believers five overall commands to help the believers think and act as the believers should. Then Paul will talk about the men who came to visit Paul from the Corinthian church and how the church should follow the example of how these men live.

Paul begins this final part of Paul's letter very simply and quickly. Paul writes in a similar way when Paul ends Paul's letters in other books in the New Testament. In each letter, Paul ends with words that encourage people to immediately start doing the things Paul tells people to do. Paul wants people to understand that it is very important to do these things.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: If you told people some important ideas, and you wanted those people to quickly go and start acting on those ideas, what words would you use? Pause this audio here.

First, Paul begins by telling the church to be on their guard, to be watchful, or to be alert. Other books of the Bible, including some of Paul's letters, use these same words to talk about being ready for Christ to return to earth soon. However, other people use the same words to remind believers to watch out for evil and the enemy, Satan. Paul does not say which of these things Paul is telling the church to watch out for, but Paul may mean both that the church needs to be ready when Jesus returns, and that they need to be ready to stand strong against evil.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: If you wanted people to pay attention and watch out for a danger nearby, what words would you use to tell people? If needed, look back at the story you told in step two to see how you described this. Pause this audio here.

Second, Paul tells the believers to stand firm in the believers' faith. Stand firm is special language that means to not change how you think or act even if someone tries to force you to change. In the original language, the specific words Paul uses could mean the believers should stand firm by continuing to believe the teachings about Christ, or the words could mean to stand firm by continuing to trust in God and Christ. You will remember that Paul used this special language earlier in this letter. Paul also uses this language in some of Paul's other letters in the New Testament.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: If you want to say that people continue to believe true things even when other people pressure them to believe untrue things, how do you say it? Pause this audio here.

Third, Paul says to be courageous, or brave. In the original language, the word Paul uses is not found anywhere else in the New Testament. However, this word can be found in many places in the Old Testament, almost always together with other words that mean "be strong." Paul is encouraging the believers in the church to have courage when the believers are surrounded by danger, especially from the believers' enemies who want to harm the believers, or want the believers to disobey God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: If you want to tell people not to be afraid of people's enemies, how would you say this? Pause this audio here.

Fourth, Paul says to be strong. Paul means to be strong in faith, or to have spiritual strength, not physical strength. The believers need this strength, as well as the courage Paul already talked about, to stand firm against the temptations to be sexually immoral, to worship idols, and to do other sinful things that many Corinthians did.

Fifth, Paul tells the believers, "Let all that you do be done in love." Paul means that the believers must do everything in a loving way, or with a loving spirit. In the original language, the word Paul uses for love means to love a person based on your sincere appreciation and high regard for that person. This command is different from Paul's first four commands. In the original language, the words Paul uses in the first four commands show that Paul is talking to all of the believers together as one group. But in this fifth command, Paul uses words that show Paul is talking to each person individually. By doing this, Paul is telling each believer that they must learn to treat others with this kind of love if each believer wants to become more spiritual. You will remember that the believers think that becoming more spiritual means learning to speak wise-sounding words, and that the believers have been boasting and dividing up to follow different leaders in the church. But Paul is saying the believers must instead treat each other with sincere love and appreciation if the believers want to become truly spiritual.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who treated others with the kind of love that showed that this person truly appreciated and valued those other people. What actions did this person do, or what words did this person say, that showed this person loved the other people? Pause this audio here.

Paul says, "Now I urge you, brothers." With these words, Paul shows Paul is about to strongly ask the believers to do something, but first Paul is going to remind the believers of some important background information. Next Paul says, "You know that the household of Stephanas were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord's people." You will remember that at the beginning of Paul's letter, Paul mentioned how Paul had baptized Stephanas' household when Paul was in Corinth. So when Paul says Stephanas' household were the first fruits, Paul is using special language to mean that the people of Stephanas' household were the first believers in Achaia just like a plant grows some fruit and then keeps growing more. Unlike those believers who have been bragging and dividing up the church, Paul says the people in Stephanas' household have devoted themselves to serving and helping God's people.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: When you talk about the first of something good that will keep happening, such as the first fruit that grows on a plant, what words do you use in your language? Pause this audio here.

Now Paul finishes saying what Paul wants the church to do. Paul urges, or very strongly asks, the believers to follow leaders in the church such as Stephanas' household, and any other person who works hard to help and provide things that other believers need.

Paul says that Paul rejoiced, or was very glad, when Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus traveled to visit Paul. Paul says this is because seeing Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus was like seeing the whole church. Because these men brought Paul news of what was happening in the Corinthian church, Paul was able to write this letter and send it back to Corinth so the church could read it. So Paul says Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus refreshed Paul's spirit and the church's spirit too. Paul means that communicating with each other has encouraged both Paul and the church.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: If friends or family you love visit you after a long time of not seeing each other, what words do you use to describe how you feel when you see each other? If needed, look back at the story you told in step two to see how you described this. Pause this audio here.

Finally, Paul tells the church to recognize, or to pay attention to, Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and to anyone who does things like these men do.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to use drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, the church in Corinth, Stephanas' household, Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, remember that Paul is giving the believers some commands to help the believers think and act differently, and Paul is showing the believers the kind of people and behaviors the believers should follow. You may want to act out the words and actions of each of the five commands Paul gives. For example, you could have someone stand guard to watch for an enemy. You could have someone stand firm while others try to pressure that person to turn a different direction or fall down. You might have someone pretend to be courageous, or brave, while others act like they are attacking or trying to make that person afraid. You could also have someone pretend to

be strong while others try to tempt that person to do wrong things. Then you could have Paul show each person how that person needs to treat other people with love. After that, you could act out how Stephanas' household serves the church, and have Paul show the church to follow leaders like these people. You could have Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus travel to Paul and tell Paul about the things happening in the church at Corinth. You could have Paul write Paul's letter and then have Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus carry it back to the church so everyone can hear what Paul wrote. And then you could have Paul showing the church to listen to and act like Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and others like these men.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:13–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The church in Corinth
- Stephanas' household
- Stephanas
- Fortunatus
- And Achaicus

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I feel concerned that the believers are forgetting the things I taught the believers when I was in Corinth, so I need to remind the believers of the main teachings again;" or
- "I know the believers remember what I taught them, but I need to remind the believers to be strong and keep doing those things instead of going back to living like the believers did before;" or
- "People in Corinth do a lot of bad things, like worshiping idols and acting sexually immoral. I need to remind the believers to watch out and stay away from those evil things."

Ask the people playing the believers in the church, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We feel bad that we hurt each other by being proud and arguing. We need to guard against these things from now on;" or
- "We feel afraid that people will say bad things about us or hate us if we do not do the things everyone else in Corinth does. But we will try to be brave like Paul says!" or
- "We do feel tempted by the things we see other people doing, but we know Paul is trying to protect us, so we will be strong and do the right thing from now on."

Paul says, "Show love in everything you do."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- "I am sad that some of the believers act like they hate each other instead of loving each other;" or
- "I taught the believers that Christ loves them. But now the believers need to learn how to love each other;" or
- "The believers understand what romantic love is, but the believers need to learn the sort of love where the believers serve others in a way that respects and appreciates everyone."

Paul says, "Stephanas' household has given themselves to serving God's people. So I urge you to follow leaders like Stephanas' household and anyone who works hard to do the same work they are doing!"

Ask the people playing the believers in the church, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We are surprised! We always follow people that look and talk like those people are important, but the people in Stephanas' household act like servants;" or
- "We really like Stephanas and his household. Stephanas and his household are very kind people who have done many good things to help people in our church;" or
- "Stephanas and his household work very hard to help others, but people do not honor Stephanas and his household for what they do."

Ask the people playing Stephanas' household, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We appreciate Paul encouraging us in the hard work we do;" or
- "We are happy that Paul is reminding other people that those people need to serve too;" or
- "We do not expect a reward here on earth for our work. We are just thankful for all Christ has done for us!"

Paul says, "I was so glad that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus came here. Having these men visit me was like having you here. These men have encouraged me, and I am sure these men have encouraged you too. Show respect to people who do things like these men do."

Ask the people playing the believers in the church, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We did not realize that Paul missed being with us so much. We miss Paul too!" or
- "We are grateful that Paul sent us this letter. Paul said some hard things, but we needed to hear these things;" or
- "We feel badly that we have not appreciated the things that Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus, and other people like them have done to serve us. We need to honor these people better."

Ask the people playing Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- "We were happy to come visit Paul. It was a difficult journey, but it was wonderful to spend time with Paul;" or
- "We were concerned about the things happening in our church, so we are glad Paul wrote this letter;" or
- "We do not feel like important people, but we are happy to serve the Lord and other believers."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:13–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul begins this passage by telling the church to "be on guard." This is special language that means to stay awake and be alert and watchful of what is happening around you, like a soldier who watches out for an enemy attack.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **be on guard**. If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul also says to **stand firm** in the **faith**. This is special language that means to not change how you think or act as you follow God even if someone tries to force you to change. This is just like a person who keeps standing in one place even if people try to push that person down. Use the same word or phrase for "stand firm" that you used in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for more information about faith, and translate faith in the same way you have in previous passages.

Paul says to do everything in **love**. In the original language, the word Paul uses in this passage for love means to treat people with affection and concern because you really appreciate and really respect that person. A person who loves in this way does not do evil things to other people, but instead treats people the way that

person would want to be treated. Use the same word or phrase for this kind of love that you used in previous passages.

Paul says, "I **urge** you **brothers**." To urge means to ask earnestly, or to ask using strong emotion. In the original language, this word "brothers" is not the same word as human brothers who are physically born from the same mother and father. Instead, this is special language that means fellow believers in Christ who are part of the same spiritual family. Use the same words or phrases for urge and brothers, or brothers and sisters, that you used in previous passages.

Paul says that Stephanas and Stephanas' **household** were the **first fruits** in Achaia. A person's household means anyone who lives in that person's house. A household might include slaves and servants as well as the members of a person's family. The term first fruits is special language that means the first people to become Christians. When a person sees the first few pieces of fruit growing on a plant or tree, that person knows that more fruit will soon grow too. So in the same way, Paul is saying that although Stephanas' household started following Christ first, many more people will also become Christians in Achaia. Use the same words or phrases for household and first fruits that you used in previous passages. For more information on household, refer to the Master Glossary.

Paul says that Stephanas and Stephanas' household **devoted** themselves to serve the **saints**. The word saints means holy people, or people that God has set apart to believe in God. Use the same word or phrase for saints that you used in previous passages. For more information on saints, refer to the Master Glossary. To devote yourself to serve someone means to give your time, energy, and attention to that person or group of people. It means showing dedication and loyalty as you care for or work toward that person's well-being.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **devoted**. If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus **refreshed** Paul's **spirit**, or Paul's inner self. Use the same word for the spirit of a person as you have used in previous passages, and see spirit in the Master Glossary for more information. In the original language, the word that Paul uses for refreshed means to "put at rest" or to encourage and strengthen. When this same word is used to talk about being refreshed physically, it means to rest from work.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **refreshed**. If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul finishes this passage by telling the church to **recognize** people like Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus because of how these men humbly serve the other believers. To recognize means to acknowledge, pay attention to, listen to, or honor.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **recognize**. If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 16:13–18

Audio Content

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1 Corinthians 16:19–24

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Corinthians 16:19–24 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:19–24 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.

5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:19–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul now finishes Paul's letter. Paul gives greetings to the believers in Corinth from some other believers. This means that these people want Paul to tell the people in Corinth that these people think about the people in Corinth and hope that the people in Corinth are well.

Stop here and, if you like, do this activity: Make three people stand in different places in the room. The person on one end of the room wants to tell something to the people on the other side of the room. The person on one end of the room tells the person in the middle to pass on the message. Pause this audio here.

Like in this activity, Paul passes on a message from the believers in Asia to the believers in Corinth.

First Paul gives greetings from believers in the churches in Asia. Asia was the name of an area where Paul was when Paul wrote this letter. Asia is part of the country that we now call Turkey.

You probably know some other letters that Paul wrote. One of these letters is a letter to the believers in Ephesus. Ephesus is in Asia. Paul probably was in Ephesus when Paul wrote Paul's letter to the Corinthians. In Paul's time, it would take weeks for someone to travel from Ephesus to Corinth. There is water in between Ephesus and Corinth, so people would have to travel part of the way by boat.

Stop here and look at a map. Find Corinth in Achaia, and Ephesus in Asia, on the map. Pause this audio here.

Then Paul mentions two particular believers, Aquila and Prisca. In the book of Acts, we heard that when Paul first came to Corinth, Paul met a Jewish husband and wife, Aquila and Priscilla. These are the same people. Aquila and Prisca were also following Jesus. Paul and Aquila had the same job—they both made tents for a living. And so, they began to stay together and work together. Aquila and Prisca are now probably with Paul in Ephesus. The believers in Corinth know Aquila and Prisca very well. Aquila and Prisca want Paul to tell the believers in Corinth that Aquila and Prisca are thinking about the believers and that they very much hope that the believers are well. A group of believers often come together in the house of Aquila and Prisca. All these believers want to tell the believers in Corinth that they are thinking about those believers.

Stop here and discuss: In your language, how do you pass on greetings from one person to another? What is the normal thing to say if one person has asked you to tell someone else that he is remembering that person, and that he hopes that person is well? Pause this audio here.

Paul then says that all the brothers and sisters send greetings. This means all these people that Paul has just mentioned together. Paul had probably told the believers in Ephesus about the problems in the church in Corinth. The people in Ephesus probably prayed for the people in Corinth. Even though all these people were very far away from each other, they were all part of the same family of Christ. The people in Ephesus were all brothers and sisters of the people in Corinth, because they all belonged to Jesus, and the Ephesians cared for the Corinthians very much.

Paul tells the believers in Corinth that the believers should greet each other with a holy kiss. In Paul's time, a kiss on another person's cheek was a normal way to show a family member that you loved and respected that person. Believers are spiritual brothers and sisters, and therefore the believers began to greet each other like family members. Paul calls this kiss holy, because it is a sign of respect and love between God's holy people.

Stop here and discuss: In your community, what is a respectful and loving way to greet other people? How do men and women greet each other respectfully and lovingly? Pause this audio here.

Then, Paul says that Paul gives his own greeting. Paul is writing this part himself. For most of the time Paul had been speaking, someone else was listening to Paul and was writing down everything that Paul said. This was

the way that people normally wrote letters in that time. But here at the end, Paul himself picks up the pen and writes Paul's own greeting.

Paul adds something unusual to his end of the letter. Paul then says that anyone who does not love the Lord will be cursed. It is so bad if someone does not love the Lord, that these people deserve that God will punish them. Perhaps Paul is thinking of all the problems in the Corinthian church when he says this.

Then Paul adds a prayer. Paul prays that Jesus will come back quickly. Some translations may use the word "maranatha" here. This is a word from the Aramaic language, the language that many of the Jewish people spoke at that time. Paul is writing his letter in the Greek language, but here Paul is using one word in Aramaic. This word means, "Lord, come back soon!"

Paul finishes by praying for the people in Corinth. Paul prays that the Lord Jesus will give grace to the believers. When God gives us grace, it means God is good and kind to us even though we do not deserve it. In the beginning of Paul's letter, Paul also prayed the same thing.

Paul then says that he loves all the believers in Corinth. Paul loves the believers because the believers believe in Christ Jesus, just as Paul does.

This is the end of this letter from Paul to the believers in Corinth. We hope that the believers in Corinth have learned much from it. We wonder what *your* church has learned from this letter?

Stop here and discuss: Can you tell a few things from this letter that you remember, and that are very important to you or to your church? Pause this audio here.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:19–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has one part.

In this part: Paul finishes his letter and gives some greetings from other believers.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers in Corinth who are listening to Paul's message
- The believers in the churches in Asia
- Aquila and Prisca
- Believers from the church that meets in the house of Aquila and Prisca
- And the Lord Jesus

Paul gives greetings from the believers in the churches in Asia.

Paul says that Aquila and Prisca greet the believers in Corinth very warmly or strongly. Aquila and Prisca love the believers in Corinth very much. Aquila and Prisca really hope that the believers will be well. The reason Aquila and Prisca greet the believers is that they all believe in the same Lord—in Jesus.

Aquila and Prisca were husband and wife. Aquila and Prisca were Jewish believers who were with Paul. The people in Corinth knew Aquila and Prisca very well, but this is the first time that Paul mentions Aquila and Prisca's names in this letter.

Stop here and discuss: How will you talk about Aquila and Prisca in this passage? Pause this audio here.

Other believers also greet the people in Corinth.

Stop here and, if you like, do this activity: Divide into groups and act out the whole process of Paul writing the letter and sending it to Corinth. In the middle of the room, Paul is writing his letter. Paul is not writing the letter himself, but Paul is speaking, and someone else is writing down everything that Paul says. On one side of Paul are the believers in Asia. On his other side, a bit farther away, are the believers in Corinth. Now, when Paul is almost finished writing—or speaking—Paul's letter, Aquila and Prisca and other believers in Asia come to Paul and talk to Paul. These believers ask Paul to tell the believers in Corinth that they are thinking about them.

When Paul has finished writing Paul's letter, Paul gives the letter to someone who will take it to Corinth. This might even be the same person who wrote down the letter. This person then travels all the way to Corinth. The journey would have taken a few weeks. You can act out that when this person reaches Corinth, he tells the believers in Corinth that he has a letter from Paul. You can act out that all the believers are telling each other that there is a letter from Paul, and that they should come listen to it. When the believers are all together, they all sit down and listen to someone who reads the letter for them. The same person who brought the letter to the believers was probably the person who read out the letter to them. Pause this audio here and do this activity.

Paul tells the believers in Corinth to greet each other lovingly and respectfully. This is the end of this letter. All this time, the believers have been sitting down and listening to someone read this whole letter to them. Again and again, the believers heard Paul say that the believers should love each other, that they should not form separate groups, and that they should not be proud. The believers should not just think about what was good for them, but what was good for other people. Now, after hearing this letter, it is time for the believers to get up, turn to each other, and tell each other that they love and respect each other! What an exciting time this might have been in the church!

Stop here and do this activity: Walk around and greet each member of your group lovingly and respectfully! Maybe you can tell each other how glad you are that these are your brothers and sisters, because you all belong to Christ.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:19–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has one part.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers in Corinth who are listening to Paul's message
- The believers in the churches in Asia
- Aquila and Prisca
- Believers from the church that meets in the house of Aquila and Prisca
- And the Lord Jesus

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Act out that Paul says to the believers in Corinth that the believers in Asia send greetings to the Corinthians. Aquila and Prisca also want the people in Corinth to know that Aquila and Prisca love the believers, because they all believe in the Lord. The believers who meet in Aquila and Prisca's house also send greetings. All these people send greetings because they are all like brothers and sisters of the Corinthians.

Pause the drama.

Ask the believers in Asia, "What are you feeling or thinking?" People may answer things like:

- "We care about the people in Corinth very much. We know that the church in Corinth has some problems, but we want the believers there to know that we love them."

Ask the believers in Corinth: "What are you thinking?" People may answer things like:

- "We miss Aquila and Prisca! We are glad that Aquila and Prisca still think about us;" or
- "We are so glad that the believers in Asia think about us. Even though we have never met these believers, it is true that we are all brothers and sisters."

Act out that Paul says to the believers in Corinth that the believers should greet each other lovingly and respectfully. Paul writes a final greeting himself. If anyone does not love the Lord, God should punish them. May the Lord come back soon!

Pause the drama.

Ask the believers in Corinth, "What are you thinking?" People may answer things like:

- "I have not been kind to some of my other believers. I am sorry about that. I really want to go to those believers and tell them that I love them!" or
- "I did not really love the Lord. I always just loved myself. I do not want God to punish me. Jesus has been so kind to me even though I did not deserve it. I am so glad that Jesus loves me, even though I have been so wrong."

Act out that Paul prays that the Lord will be good and kind to the believers in Corinth. Paul loves all the believers in Corinth. Paul loves the believers because they believe in Christ Jesus, just as Paul does.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you thinking?" The person may answer things like:

- "The church in Corinth has so many problems, but I love the people very much! I pray that God will help the people to do better. I really hope the people have listened carefully to my letter and that they will do all the things that I told them."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Corinthians 16:19–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

The **churches** in Asia send greetings to the believers in Corinth. The churches are the groups of believers in Asia. Use the same word for church as you have used in previous passages. The word church is in the Master Glossary.

Aquila and Prisca greet the believers in the **Lord**. The Lord refers to Jesus Christ. Christians call Jesus Lord because Jesus is their master. Use the same word as you have used in previous passages. The word Lord is in the Master Glossary.

The believers should kiss each other with a **holy** kiss. People should greet other believers respectfully and lovingly because they are holy. The believers are holy because the believers are set apart from all the other people. The believers belong to God, who is completely good, completely pure, powerful, and majestic. Use the same word for holy as you have used in other passages. The word holy is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss: How would you, in your language, say that people have to greet each other respectfully and lovingly, because they are holy? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that God should **curse** anyone who does not love the Lord. If you curse someone, you hope that something bad will happen to that person. When God curses people, God punishes those people. The word curse is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss: How will you say in your translation that anyone who does not love the Lord should be cursed? Pause this audio here.

Paul prays that our **Lord will come**. Paul is praying that the Lord Jesus will come back to earth and begin to reign as king forever. Paul calls the Lord "our Lord," because Jesus is the Lord of all the believers.

Stop here and discuss how you will say in your translation that Paul prays that our Lord will come.

Paul prays that the **grace** of the Lord Jesus will be with the believers. When someone shows us grace, that person does something good for us, or gives us something good that we do not deserve. God shows grace to people when God forgives those people for their sins and makes them his children. Paul prays that the Lord will do good things for the believers even though the believers do not deserve this. Use the same word for grace as you have used in previous passages. The word grace is in the Master Glossary.

Paul **loves** all the believers in Corinth in **Christ** Jesus. Paul does not love the believers because they are nice people, or because they have been kind to Paul, but Paul loves them because they all belong to Christ Jesus. Use the same words for love and for Christ as you have used in earlier passages. The word Christ is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss how you will say that Paul loves the believers in Christ Jesus.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Corinthians 16:19–24

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