

Resource: Familiarization, Internalization, Articulation (Fia)

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Familiarization, Internalization, Articulation (Fia)

EPH

Ephesians 1:1–6

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

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

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

Paul is writing a letter to the church at Ephesus. Most of Paul's letters to churches start with similar kinds of greetings. When Paul greets the people, he introduces himself. Then Paul tells who the letter is for. Then Paul blesses the people.

Stop here and look at a map of Asia Minor with Ephesus marked. Notice the nearby cities and towns. Pause the recording here.

Paul probably wrote this letter to the followers of Jesus who lived in Asia Minor. Asia Minor is the area of the country of Turkey today. Some of the followers of Jesus in Asia Minor were Jewish people who had decided to follow Jesus. Other followers of Jesus were Gentiles. This means that they were not Jewish. These people had only been followers of Jesus for a few years. The purpose of the letter seems to be to teach the new believers how to follow Jesus Christ well. Most translations say that the letter is to the church at Ephesus. However, most translators also agree that Paul probably does not identify Ephesus specifically. Scholars believe that Paul meant for messengers to read or preach the letter to several different churches in Asia Minor. The person who was reading the letter to each church would put the name of the church at the beginning where the name Ephesians is.

Paul had already spent three years in Ephesus. During that time, Paul taught many people about Jesus and what it means to be a follower of Jesus. When Paul remained in one city such as Ephesus for a period of time, Paul

also taught those from the surrounding villages and towns. People from these towns came to Ephesus to listen to Paul teach and then took the teaching back to their churches. The followers of Jesus in these churches usually met in homes. People throughout the entire province of Asia Minor heard about Jesus and how to become a follower of Jesus. Sometime after Paul left Ephesus, the Roman government arrested Paul. Paul was in Rome as a prisoner when Paul wrote this letter.

Stop here and look at the map showing Ephesus and the surrounding towns again. Notice Rome on the map and the distance between Rome and Ephesus. Pause the recording here.

Paul starts the letter by identifying himself as the writer and as an apostle. As you may remember from the book of Acts, Paul is an apostle. People began using the title apostle for the 12 disciples after Jesus rose from the dead. An apostle is a person whom Jesus appointed and sent to tell others the message of the good news. Paul met Jesus in a vision and became a follower of Jesus. Jesus appointed Paul to be one of the apostles. Paul immediately began telling others about Jesus. Eventually Paul went with others on long journeys and visited many cities around the Mediterranean Sea. Paul started churches in many cities and then later wrote to the believers in those churches to encourage them to continue to follow Jesus well and to keep their churches strong. The churches would pass the letters to other churches who also read Paul's message.

Paul says that this letter is to the saints, or holy people, in Ephesus. God chose and set apart his people to be holy and to serve him. Saints are holy people, and all believers in Jesus are saints!

Stop and discuss the following question as a group. Tell a story about someone who sent an important letter to a group of people. How do you begin important letters in your culture? If you don't send letters, talk about messages. Tell about someone who sent an important message to another place. How do you begin important messages or notices for your people? Pause this audio here.

After Paul introduces the letter, he says thank you to God in the form of a prayer, as he usually does. We know that Paul thought that giving thanks like this was really important. Paul praises God for all the blessings or good things that God gives to those who believe in Jesus as their Lord and as their Savior, or Christ. Paul reminds us that God is the father of Jesus. Paul reminds us of the fact that Jesus is our Savior by calling Jesus our Lord, or master, and our Savior, or Christ. And most importantly, Paul reminds us that Jesus is God's son! Because of that, we receive spiritual blessings, or full life with God forever. We receive those wonderful things even now. These are things to praise God for!

Then Paul added more things to praise God for. God's people are so special to him that even before God created or built the world, God chose his people to be holy or set apart for God. Paul used a word picture of building or construction as Paul talks about the creation. Paul said that God laid the foundation for the world.

Stop here and discuss the following question. Talk about how you build a house or other buildings. How do you prepare the foundation of the house or the first layer that goes in or on the ground? Talk about why the foundation or first layer of the house is important to the whole structure. Pause the audio here.

Before God created the world, God chose his people. God's people are holy because Jesus has made us holy through what he did when he died on the cross. Therefore, God sees that his people are free from guilt for their sins, or blameless. God loved us. God took pleasure in us: he was happy to be with us. Therefore, when God chose us, he chose to adopt us, or to bring us into his family as his children. When someone adopts a child into their family, they give them the same rights and privileges as someone born into the family. This means that an adopted child even gets the same inheritance as a child born into the family. Jesus, our Savior, made this adoption possible. God chose us and gave us this glorious, or powerful, gift of adoption into his family even though we did not deserve it. We praise God because God's son, that he loves very much, Jesus, made this adoption possible. We belong to Jesus now!

Stop here and discuss the following question. Tell a story about a family that adopted a child. Describe the rights and privileges that this child had. Talk about how adoption works in your village. Pause the audio here.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 1:1–6 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 starts the letter by saying who wrote the letter and to whom Paul is writing. Paul asks God to bless the people with grace and peace.

In the second part: Paul prays to God in the same way as he does in almost every letter he writes to churches. Paul prays and thanks God for some of the things that God has done. The prayer reminds the people who are receiving the letter of some of the things that God has done.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The faithful saints at Ephesus, or those who will receive the letter
- God is mentioned. God inspired Paul to write these things in the letter.
- Jesus Christ is mentioned

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Paul starts this letter by saying, "I am the writer of this letter." Most likely, Paul spoke the letter out loud to someone who wrote it down. Then, someone else took the letter to the churches and read it out loud or preached it to the churches. Paul also says that God has chosen him to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, or the Savior Jesus. Paul both states his name and his role as an apostle in his greetings to the believers.

Stop here and discuss as a group the best way to say that Paul is writing the letter and that God chose Paul to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. Pause the recording here.

In this passage, the original language calls Jesus Christ Jesus, which puts the title Christ before the name Jesus. In other passages, the order may be different and say Jesus Christ. As we know, the title Christ means the special king and savior that God promised to send. "Christ Jesus" and "Jesus Christ" both mean the same thing. Later in this same letter, Paul says Jesus Christ.

Pause the recording here and discuss the following question. Will it confuse your people if you sometimes say Christ Jesus and sometimes say Jesus Christ? If this is a problem for them, you may decide to always use the same order. You may need to talk with others before making this decision. Pause the recording here.

Paul wanted people to read the letter out loud so that everyone would hear the letter and understand the letter. Paul sent the letter with someone who would be able to read this in a way that the people could understand. But the original language that Paul was using may be very different from the way you speak in your language. You may choose to say this letter in a way that is more like your language. Here is an example. You might say something like:

Praise to God. He is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.

These blessings come from the heavenly kingdoms.

We receive these blessings because we are united with Christ.

When you translate, remember that spiritual blessings are not the same as earthly blessings. Earthly blessings would be food, jobs, a house, and so forth. Spiritual blessings would be ways that God blesses our spirits with peace, joy, and other things that God sends us to encourage us and help us trust him more.

Stop here and discuss the best way to say Paul's message so that your people will understand it clearly. Pause the recording here.

In the second part of this passage, Paul thanks God for all the spiritual blessings that God has given those who believe in Jesus. Paul lists some of these blessings. Even before God created the universe, God loved us and

prepared a plan for us. God chose us to be holy or without fault in God's eyes. God decided that God would adopt us into God's family because of what Jesus Christ has done for us.

Stop here and remember the stories about adoption that you told in the previous step. Tell one of the stories again, and listen for the words you use to talk about someone adopting someone else into their family as full members of the family. Pause this audio here.

God has willingly given God's glorious, or powerful, grace to those who follow God's son Jesus. Although Paul says that God has given us his grace through the "one he loves," or the "person he loves," we know that Paul is talking about God's son Jesus whom he loves very much. You may make it clear that God is talking about his son Jesus in your translation. Paul praises God for all these spiritual blessings.

Stop here and practice describing the blessings that Paul says God has given his people. The other members of the team should listen for ways to list these blessings in a clear and natural way in your language. Pause the recording here.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of the characters. As you begin to re-tell the story of these verses, Paul points to God when Paul says that God chose Paul to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. Point to the believers at Ephesus when Paul says he is writing to them. When Paul asks for grace and peace for the believers, show God the Father and Jesus giving these things to the believers. Then, when Paul prays and asks God to bless the Ephesians, show that God is the one blessing them with spiritual blessings. As Paul lists each blessing, show each blessing. For example, when Paul says that God adopts believers into his family, show all the believers surrounding and welcoming a new believer into the family. Show that this new believer is exactly the same as those already in the family. Then show that the believers are praising God for the grace that he has given them because they are now part of his family as children.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 1:1–6 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
- The faithful saints at Ephesus, or those who will receive the letter
- 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 part one, Paul writes to those who are members of the church in Ephesus and the area surrounding Ephesus. Paul starts the letter by saying that Paul is the writer. Paul is writing to the followers of Jesus at Ephesus. Then Paul says a brief prayer asking God to give the church at Ephesus grace and peace.

Pause the drama.

Ask Paul, "Why are you writing to these people? Do you know them?" You may hear, "I lived in Ephesus for three years, and I know many followers of Jesus who live in the area. However, there are many who have become believers that I have never met. The church is growing. I want to make sure that these believers have the information they need to grow in their faith and become more like God. I can't visit them now because I'm in prison. The only way is to write to them and hope they understand."

Ask the believers in Ephesus, "How are you feeling as you receive this letter?" You may hear, "I am so excited to have this letter. Paul knows so much about how to follow Jesus. I'm looking forward to hearing this and learning more about how to be a good follower myself."

In part two, Paul writes a prayer of praise thanking God for all the spiritual blessings that God has poured out on the believers. Paul reminds the believers that God has blessed them with every spiritual blessing. Even before God created the universe, God loved us and had a plan for us. God wanted us to be holy and without fault. God decided to adopt us into his own family and God did this through Jesus Christ. God has poured out grace on those who belong to Jesus. Jesus is God's own dear Son.

Pause the drama.

Ask Paul, "Why is it important for the believers to know about these spiritual blessings?" You may hear, "I am worried for my friends in these churches. False teachers will come and try to tell them false things. They may say we can't be holy. They may say God didn't adopt us. False teachers may say that we have to try to earn God's favor. I want them to know these true things so that when the false teachers come, they will understand that the teaching is false. I want them to know about God's love and God's grace."

Ask those receiving the letter, "How do you feel knowing that God has adopted you?" You may hear, "I have heard others say this but this letter makes it seem so much more real. I really am a child of God. God is my father. If I'm God's child, no one can take this away from me. This is wonderful news and I know it's true." Or, "I doubt this. I can't believe God would see me as his child."

Ask those receiving the letter, "How do you feel knowing that you have received this grace that God has poured out on you?" You may hear, "Grace means receiving something I didn't deserve. I know I don't deserve this grace from God—to be one of God's children through adoption. I could never do enough to earn this position or God's forgiveness. I could never earn this by being holy or without blame. I'm so glad that God has given it to me anyway. This is a reason to rejoice. I'm like Paul. I want to praise God for what God has done for me."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

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

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

Use the same names or words for **Paul**, **apostle**, and **Christ** that you have used in your previous translations such as the Book of Acts. Apostle and Christ are discussed in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and review the names that you have already chosen for these terms in other books of the Bible: Paul's name, the title for **Jesus Christ**, and the word **apostle**. You would use those same words here. Pause the audio here.

God chose Paul by the **will of God**. "Will of God" is a phrase that means that this is what God intends, plans, or purposes. God planned to choose Paul as his apostle.

Pause the recording here and select the best phrase in your language that expresses this same idea. If you have already translated this idea in another book of the Bible, use the same word or phrase that you have used there. Pause this recording here.

Paul writes to the **saints**. Saint, or holy ones, describe those who believe that Jesus is the promised Savior. These "holy ones" are people who God chose and set apart to belong to him. Use the same word for saint that you have used in the translation of other books.

If necessary, stop here and discuss what word or description you will use for **saint**. Saint is discussed in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Paul asks God the **Father** and the **Lord** Jesus Christ to give God's saints **grace** and **peace**. Grace refers to God showing his favor to people who don't deserve this favor. Peace describes the good relationship with God that gives us full life.

If necessary, stop here and discuss what words you will use for **grace** and **peace**. Use the same words for grace and peace that you have used in previous translations. [Grace](#t61) and [peace](#t161) are discussed in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Father refers to heavenly father or to God. Paul uses the same word for father that you use for your own fathers.

If necessary, stop here and discuss how you will talk about God as a **Father** in this book. Use the same word for God as Father that you have used in other books of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

Paul talks about the **Lord** Jesus Christ. A lord is a master or the person who is in control of everything.

If necessary, stop here and discuss what word you will use for **lord**. Lord is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for lord that you have used in other translations. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that God has given us every **spiritual blessing** in the **heavenly realms**. Spiritual is a word that refers to God's Spirit or things from God. Here, spiritual blessing is different from good things in the world like good food or a good house. Spiritual blessings describe those blessings that come from God rather than from the material world, like peace and joy. Bless and spirit are discussed in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and decide how to translate the phrase **spiritual blessing**. Pause the recording here.

The heavenly realms is the kingdom where God lives and rules. At the time Paul wrote this letter, people believed that there were many layers or levels to heaven and God lived in the highest layer. This letter is referring to the place where God lives and rules.

Stop here and decide how you will talk about the **heavenly realms**. Heaven is in the Master Glossary. Pause the recording here.

God chose us to be **holy**, or set apart for service to him.

If necessary, stop here and discuss what word you will use for **holy**. Holy is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for holy that you have used in previous translations. Pause this audio here.

God chose to **adopt** those who believe in Jesus. Use the same word for adopt that you have used in previous translations. To adopt someone is to take that person into the family with the same rights as one born to the parents. The parent sees no difference between an adopted child and a child born to them.

If necessary, stop here and discuss what word you will use for **adopt**. Pause this audio here.

God gave us this glorious grace, and we are thankful for it! We see God's glory, or majesty and power, when we see his grace.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate "We praise God for his glorious, or powerful, grace!" Glory 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.

Ephesians 1:1–6

Audio Content

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Ephesians 1:7–10

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 1:7–10 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 1:7–10 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 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 Ephesians 1:7-10 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul started this part of the letter by praising God for all the spiritual blessings that God has given to those who believe. In this passage Paul talks about more things to thank God for.

Paul wants those who are believers to know all that God has done for them. Paul has just been talking about Jesus the Savior or Christ, the One God loves. Paul has said that Jesus made it possible for believers to be God's children too. Paul goes on to say how God has redeemed the believers, or set them free with the blood of Jesus. When Paul says that God redeemed the believers, Paul is reminding the Jewish believers of the Passover in Egypt. When the Israelites were slaves, God freed them. God told the Israelites to spread the blood of the lamb they killed over their doors. This blood protected them from God's angel of death which killed the firstborn son of the Egyptians. Then the king of Egypt allowed the Israelites to leave. God told the Israelites to make this a special holiday called the Passover. Then they would always remember how the blood of a lamb on their doors freed them from slavery in Egypt. Paul is comparing Jesus to these sacrifices that the Israelites used to make in order to restore their relationship with God. Jesus, like those sacrifices, made us free, or redeemed us, with the blood of Jesus when he bled and died on the cross. Jesus really is the Christ, the Savior!

Stop here and talk about a time where one person freed another person from slavery or from oppression. What did the person who rescued the others do? How do you feel when you hear this story of freedom? Pause the audio here.

We do not deserve for God to send Jesus to free us. However, God loves us so much that he saves us anyway. Paul likes to talk a lot about the riches of God and about how much God likes to give people many gifts. Paul talks about the riches or large amount of God's grace. The image of this large amount of grace is like a fountain that overflows. So much comes from the fountain that the basin can't contain it. So much grace flows from God that we can't even take it all in or understand it. Paul says that God has showered God's kindness on us with wisdom and understanding. Paul uses the image of rain falling abundantly on the believer to show how wisdom and understanding fall on us.

Stop here and talk about a time when someone gave you so many gifts that you couldn't carry them all or hold them all in your hands. How did you feel? Why did that person give you so many gifts? Pause the audio here.

Paul also reminds the believers that God had a plan. This plan existed for a long time. But it's been a mystery, which means that only God could reveal it. Now God gives us his wisdom and understanding of his plan. God has revealed this plan to those who believe in Jesus. Then Paul tells the believers what the plan is. Paul says that everything in heaven and on earth will come together under the authority of Christ. Paul will make this clear later in the letter when Paul explains how Jesus as the head controls the believers, or the church. Paul doesn't explain these things here. Paul has already taught the people and this is just a reminder of this very important teaching.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 1:7–10 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 continues to explain what God has done for those who believe in Jesus.

In the second part: Paul also explains the plan that God has had from the beginning and has now revealed to those who believe.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Ephesian followers of Jesus
- God who inspires Paul to write these things.
- Jesus Christ

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

The first part of this passage begins by referring to the One that God loves, who is Jesus our Savior, or Christ. It is *him*, or Jesus, who redeemed us or made us free. Now Paul tells us how Jesus made us free. Paul says that Jesus' blood made us free. Remember that Jesus' blood refers to Jesus' death on the cross. Blood was important in the Jewish sacrificial system, and it is important that Jesus bled and died. God made us free through Jesus' death because he wanted to give us many gifts even though we did not deserve them. When God made us free, he forgave us of all of our sins, or disobedience. We did not deserve this gift from God. Paul says that God gives us this grace, or undeserved gifts, because he is wealthy, or has so much to give us. Paul is showing us that God gives more than we expect, and we enjoy it more than we can imagine.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Talk again about a time when someone gave you more good gifts than you imagined they would. How did you talk about it? Pay attention to the words you used to talk about how that person gave gifts because they had so much to give. Pause this audio here.

In the second part of this passage, Paul talks about the plan that God showed his people. God gave wisdom to us, and helped us understand his plan. It makes God happy to show us his plan. God's plan involves Jesus Christ, the promised savior. This plan will happen when God's right time comes.

At the end of this passage, Paul reveals God's plan. God will give Jesus Christ authority over everything in heaven, where God lives, and over everything on earth.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of the characters. You may want to have a group of objects or people representing believers before they received freedom. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, Paul points to Jesus when he says that it is because of *Jesus' blood* when he died for us that God has redeemed us, or made us free. As God sends Jesus, and Jesus dies, show that the believers are free now. God shows that he has more grace, like a valuable treasure, than we can imagine. God takes from this grace and gives it to us. It is more than we can expect. Now Paul points to God and then the believers when he says that God joyfully gives the believers wisdom and understanding about his plan. Show how the believers do not know the plan at first, but God shows us his plan—God uses Jesus to make his plan happen. In the right time, God places Jesus in authority over everything in heaven and earth. At the end of this passage, everything in heaven and earth is peacefully following Jesus' leadership. How will you show that Jesus has authority over everything?

*Embodying the Text**Embodying the Text*

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 1:7–10 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
- Ephesian followers of Jesus
- God who inspires Paul to write these things.
- 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 scene one, God with the help of the Holy Spirit inspires Paul to write the letter. Paul explains that God used the blood of Jesus to free everyone who believes in Jesus. As well as giving us freedom, God forgave all our sins.

Pause the drama.

Ask God, "Why do you want to remind the people about the blood of the Passover Lamb and the blood sacrifice system of the Old Testament?" You may hear, "Since the beginning, I have used blood to restore people to myself and to have a good relationship with people. Now it is the blood of Jesus that saves them. They need to see that this is all one continuous plan."

Ask Paul, "How do you feel knowing that God through the Holy Spirit is telling you to write these things in the letter?" You may hear, "This is wonderful. I am filled with awe or joy. God gives us so much more than we deserve. I always try to listen to God and teach what God wants the people to know."

Paul also explains God's mysterious plan to the Ephesians. The plan is that God, at the right time, will bring everything both in heaven and on earth under the authority of Jesus. The plan was a mystery—people did not understand the plan until God revealed the plan.

Pause the drama.

Ask the Ephesians, "How do you feel now that you know God's plan?" You may hear, "I'm ready for this to happen. I'm so glad to be reminded that God has this plan. Paul told us about it, but I had forgotten. I'm ready for this plan to come. I want Jesus to be in control of this world! I wish the right time was right now!"

*Filling the Gaps**Filling the Gaps*

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 1:7–10 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

This passage uses many words that you have already used in the book of Acts as well as other passages from the gospels.

Stop here and review the words you have already chosen for **Christ** and **grace**. Use the same word for Christ and grace that you have used in previous passages. Each of these words is in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

In Jesus we have **redemption** for the **forgiveness** of our **sin**. Redemption means the same as redeem. When you redeem something, you set it free.

Stop here and discuss the word you will use for **redemption**. Redeem is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you may have used in previous passages. Pause the audio here.

God **forgave** our **sins**. Any time someone disobeys God, that person sins. When God forgives your sins, it is the same as if the sins don't exist. God no longer sees the sins.

Stop here and discuss the words you will use for **forgiveness** and **sin**. Forgiveness and sin are discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same words for forgiveness and sin that you have used in other books of the Bible. Pause the audio here.

God gave us **wisdom** and understanding. When you have wisdom, you think things that are true and make good decisions.

Stop here and discuss what word you will use for **wisdom**. Use the same word that you have used in previous translations. Wisdom is in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

When you understand something, you can think or learn or even judge if something is right or not.

Stop here and discuss the following question: What is the difference between memorizing something and understanding something such as a lesson at school? Understanding is more than just memorizing facts. How do you explain that difference? Pause the audio here.

Jesus has authority over everything in **heaven** and on earth. Heaven is the place where God lives and rules. Sometimes heaven also refers to the place where any unseen powers or spirit beings might live. Jesus has authority over all of it. Use the same word for heaven that you have used in previous passages. Heaven is discussed 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.

Ephesians 1:7-10

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4016704 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Ephesians 1:11-14

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 1:11-14 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 1:11-14 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 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 Ephesians 1:11–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul has been telling the believers in Ephesus about God's wonderful plan. Now Paul explains that God chose the believers, and the believers belong to God.

Paul starts by reminding the believers that they are united in Christ. This means that God has brought all the believers, both the Jews and the Gentiles, into one group together. The Jews were God's original chosen people from the time of Abraham. Jesus was a Jew. But now even non-Jews, or Gentiles, can be God's chosen people. God chose all believers in Jesus as his special, chosen people. God's chosen people are like God's inheritance—his special children just for him. Perhaps Paul is telling them that instead of God receiving them as his inheritance, they receive an inheritance from God because they are united with Jesus Christ. This makes them children of God, and like any child they have inheritance rights. In either case, people who believe in Jesus are special, chosen people. They do receive an inheritance from God, and God does make them his own people.

Stop here and discuss the following question: Who has the right to inherit property or money when someone dies in your culture? Pause the recording here.

Paul says that God chose us in advance, even before we became believers in Jesus. Paul compares God's choice to casting lots, which was when someone threw small objects to choose or select something or someone for a special purpose. The last time we heard about casting lots was in the book of Acts when the disciples chose someone to replace Judas as one of the apostles. Here, Paul says that God chose us to be God's people. It was God's will, or desire, to do this. God himself did this action—people did not make it happen.

Why did God choose us? Paul says that God chose us so that we would bring praise and glory to God. Paul says that God first chose the Jews—the people Paul describes as "we who were the first to trust in Jesus Christ, the promised savior." God chose the Jews so that they would praise God for his greatness. Then God went to the Gentiles with the good news. Paul has just reminded the believers that the Jews and Gentiles are united in Jesus.

Paul uses another word picture when he describes what happens to believers when they believe in Jesus. Some translations say that believers are marked with a seal. Other translations say that God identified believers as His own people. In the time when Paul wrote this letter, people often put a wax seal on an item to show who owned the item. People would melt the wax and then press an identifying object such as a ring into the melted wax. This image would be the identifying seal. Anyone who saw the seal would know that this object belonged to the person with that special mark.

Stop here and look at a picture of a wax seal. Pause the recording here.

Stop here and discuss the following question: How do other people know that something belongs to you? Talk about the different things that you own and how people might know that these things belong to you. For example, a house, an animal, or your child. Pause the recording here.

The purpose of this seal was to be a guarantee that the full payment would come later. Paul uses a business term. Sometimes, when you purchase something, you make a deposit of some money or a down payment. This guarantees that you will make the full payment later. This is the image that Paul has given the Ephesian believers. The believers received the Holy Spirit when they believed in Jesus. But they don't have the full inheritance yet. They will receive the full inheritance later when God accomplishes His plan. The Holy Spirit is like the deposit or down payment so that we can be sure that God will keep His promise to give his believers life forever with him.

Stop here and tell a story about someone who gives someone else a first payment on something, promising to pay in full at a later date. In your culture, how do you give someone a guarantee that you will pay them in full later? Pause the recording here.

Paul reminds the believers that God gave them God's Holy Spirit when they believed in Jesus. Only people who believe in Jesus have this Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit identifies the believers as belonging to God. This is like the wax seal that Paul just referred to. The Holy Spirit guarantees that believers will receive the inheritance that God has promised to the people God has redeemed, or freed from sin, and who believe in him. When God

looks at the believer who has the Holy Spirit, it is the same as looking at a wax seal with an identifying mark. God knows that this person belongs to God.

Paul finishes this section by telling the believers that God gave us this seal of the Holy Spirit so that we would praise God's glory, or praise God for his greatness.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 1:11–14 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 2 parts.

In the first part: Paul says that we, the believers, are a special people to God. God chose us in advance to give praise and glory to God.

In the second part: Paul explains how the good news was first for the Jews and then for the Gentiles. Then Paul explains that all who believe in Jesus have the Holy Spirit and this Holy Spirit marks all believers as belonging to God. This mark is our guarantee that we will receive our inheritance. God has done all this so that we, the believers, would praise God's glory, or greatness.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Ephesian believers, including both Jews and Gentiles
- God inspires Paul to write these things.
- Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first part of this passage Paul continues what he said in the previous passage. Paul says that believers are united or made one in Christ. Because believers follow Christ, they belong to God. There are two possible ways to understand the following part of the letter. Either all of these believers will receive an inheritance from God, or the believers themselves will become God's inheritance, which means that they become God's own people. Either way, whoever receives an inheritance in that culture receives it because they are part of the family. This means that because believers follow Jesus, they are part of God's special family. They belong to God and they receive God's promised inheritance. God decided to choose the believers as his own people long ago. God makes everything work just like God planned it.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you translate this phrase: "God chose us to receive an inheritance"? or "God chose us to be his own inheritance, or his own people"? Remember that in either case, God is saying that the people who follow Christ belong to God. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that God chose us in advance, or at an earlier time. Paul compares God's choice to casting lots, which was when someone threw small objects to choose or select something or someone for a special purpose. The last time we heard about casting lots was in the book of Acts when the disciples chose someone to replace Judas as one of the apostles. Here, Paul says that God chose us to be God's people. It was God's will, or desire, to do this. God himself did this action—people did not make it happen.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you talk about God choosing his people? How will you talk about this being God's plan even before the believers believed in Jesus? Pause this audio here.

In the second part of this passage, Paul turns to the Jews and says that we, the Jews, were the first ones to put our hope in Christ, or to trust in Christ. Paul includes himself in the group of Jews because Paul is a Jew himself.

Although Paul does not use the title "Jews" here, we know that Paul was talking about the Jews. This is because the Jews were the first people to put their hope in Christ, which means that they confidently expected Jesus to give them eternal life forever with God. This was God's plan. God did this so that the Jewish believers would praise God for his glory, or greatness.

Then Paul tells the Gentiles that now they have also heard the truth. Paul says that the truth is the good news that God saves them. God promised a long time ago that God would give this Holy Spirit to those who believe. This Holy Spirit is like a mark of identification or ownership. Anyone who sees that mark or the Holy Spirit will know that this person belongs to God. The Holy Spirit is God's guarantee that God will give us our inheritance that God has promised us because we belong to him. God will redeem us. This means that God will free us from our old life and give us new life with him. God has done all of this so that we can praise and glorify God.

Stop here and remember the story you told in step 2 about giving a guarantee to someone that you will pay them in full later. Listen to how the storyteller describes this first payment. This will help you decide the best way to talk about this guarantee. Pause this audio here.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of the characters.

As you begin to re-tell the story of these verses, gather a group of Jewish believers and a separate group of Gentile believers. Paul shows that the Jewish and Gentile believers are united together in one group together with Jesus because of what Jesus Christ has done for all of them. This group should show that they are a special group that God has chosen. Perhaps it means that God will give them an inheritance. Perhaps it means that the group is God's inheritance. Either way, the group is very special to God. How can you show this? Paul points to God and says that God makes everything work according to His plan—God planned for this group to be together.

Paul then points to the Jewish believers and says that God chose the Jewish believers first. God's plan was that the Jewish believers would praise God for his glory or greatness. As Paul says this, the Jewish believers can show that they are praising God.

Paul turns to the Gentile believers and says, "You Gentiles have also heard the good news that God saves you." Paul points to the Holy Spirit who moves to join with the believers. Paul says that the Holy Spirit is God's guarantee, or promise of payment. The Holy Spirit marks the believers so that God knows they belong to God when God looks at them. Have the Holy Spirit move among the believers and mark each one in some way. Paul points back to God and says to the believers, "You are God's people. God has freed you from sin. God did this so that you can praise and glorify God." Have the believers praise and glorify God as Paul says this.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 1:11–14 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
- Ephesian believers, including both Jews and Gentiles
- God inspires Paul to write these things.
- 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.

In Part 1, Paul says that believers are united in Christ. Each believer has an inheritance that God planned for those who believe. Paul says that God chose his special people, the believers, in advance or before they believed. God makes everything work according to his plan.

Pause the drama.

Ask the believers, "How do you feel when you hear that you are united in Christ?" You may hear, "This is such good news. It means that there is no difference between us. We are all the same in God's eyes. God doesn't see a Jewish believer or a Gentile believer. God sees believers. I'm so glad to hear this. It helps us bond together into an even stronger bond."

Ask one of the believers, "How do you feel knowing that God chose you in advance? You may hear, "I am in awe, I don't know why. I wasn't a good person. It's so good to know that God chose me even with all my faults. I'm one of God's own people now. I can't believe I'm so special to God! This is good news."

In Part 2, Paul explains that the Jews first and then the Gentiles have heard the truth of the good news. Once they believed, they received the Holy Spirit. God sees this as the mark of identification that shows that they belong to God. No one can mistake this mark and think they belong to someone else. This mark of the Holy Spirit is the guarantee for all believers that each one will receive his inheritance from God. God redeemed us, or freed us from sin and to be God's own people. God did this so that we can praise and glorify God.

Pause the drama.

Ask God, "Why did you give the people the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of their inheritance?" You may hear, "It is easy for people to get mixed up, to hear other teaching and begin to believe other things. I gave them the Holy Spirit so that they would listen to the Holy Spirit and know that they are mine. I love them and I want them to know that nothing and no one can take them away from me. They belong to me and I have such joy in giving them their inheritance."

Ask the Ephesians, "How do you feel about having this mark of identification?" You may hear, "I love it. I'm so glad that there can be no doubt. I'm confident that I belong to God. No one can take this away from me. Because of this and what God has done, I want to praise God all the time."

Ask Paul, "Why do you think God told you to write about the Holy Spirit being a guarantee or down payment on their future inheritance?" You may hear, "This is an image that the people understand. They all know about making a down payment or a deposit on something. They know that this means that they will have eternal life in the future. I think God wants them to understand that they belong to God and nothing can change that. That assurance is very comforting to the believers. I also think God wants them to know for sure that they will receive even more in the future when they get their full inheritance."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 1:11–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Use the same word for **Christ** that you have used in previous translations. Christ is discussed in the Master Glossary.

In some translations, Paul says that the believers have an **inheritance** from God, or that the believers are God's inheritance. Inheritance refers to the property or money that a father gives his children when the father dies.

Stop here and discuss what description you will give in your translation for **inheritance**. Translate inheritance in the same way you have translated it in other books of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

Paul reminds the Ephesians that the **Jews** were the first people to accept the **good news** or **gospel** by saying that "we were the first to put our hope in Christ." Then Paul says that God included the **Gentiles** in his people when they heard the gospel and accepted it. Gospel is another word for the good news that Jesus died to save people from their sins and that if we believe, we have life forever with God in heaven.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words you will use for good news, or gospel. Good news or gospel are discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you have used in previous translations. Pause this audio here.

The Jews were Abraham's descendants and God's chosen people. The Gentiles were anyone who was not a Jew. Jesus was a Jewish person, and that's why most of the first believers in Jesus were Jewish.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: Some translations include the names for **Jew** and **Gentile** in their translations to make it clear who Paul is talking about. Discuss how you want to talk about the different groups of believers. Jews and Gentile are both in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Believers praise God's **glory**, or his greatness or power.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **glory**. Remember that glory is in the Master Glossary.

The **Holy Spirit** is God's **seal** that **guarantees** that God will give us the inheritance that God promised. Other words for guarantee are pledge, down payment, deposit, or the first part of what God has promised. Once someone pays this initial amount, this amount is used as the guarantee that they will pay the rest of the price.

Stop here and look at the picture of a seal again if needed. Pause the recording here.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **Holy Spirit**. Use the same words you have used in previous books of the Bible, and remember that Holy Spirit is in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you talk about the Holy Spirit being God's guarantee that God will give us the inheritance that he promised? Pause this audio here.

The Holy Spirit is our guarantee that God will **redeem** us, or obtain our freedom from slavery to sin so that we can be God's own people. In other passages, we understand that God obtained us through the blood of Jesus Christ. Use the same word for redeem that you used in previous passages, and remember that redeem 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.

Ephesians 1:11–14

Audio Content

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Ephesians 1:15–23

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 1:15–23 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 1:15–23 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 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 Ephesians 1:15–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this passage Paul starts another prayer. Paul is writing to those who follow Jesus. This prayer asks God to help God's people understand and know God better.

Paul tells the followers of Jesus in Ephesus that Paul has heard how the believers trust in Jesus and how they love other believers. Paul says that Paul has been continually praying for the followers of Jesus who live in Ephesus. At that time many devoted Jews spent hours each day praying. Paul was a devoted Jew before becoming a follower of Jesus. It seems that Paul still spends hours each day in prayer. In this prayer, Paul not only thanks God for the believers, asks God to make the believers strong, but also reminds the believers of God's power and authority.

Paul gives God two titles. The first title describes God as the God that Jesus worshiped. The second title describes God as the Father in heaven who has great glory. This is the only time that Paul uses this title for God. Paul gives God great honor when Paul calls God the "Glorious Father." Paul is saying that God is the source of all beauty, honor, and majesty. In this passage, Paul says that the God of Glory is the father of those who believe in Jesus.

Paul asks God to give the believers spiritual wisdom and insight. Paul wants these believers to understand that God has given the believers much hope, many riches from his glorious inheritance, and much power. Paul talks about hope, riches, and power many times in this letter. Paul says that we all have a hope, or eager expectation, that God will save us. God is inviting us to expect this salvation. Paul also says that along with this salvation comes riches, or great wealth, because we are children of God, saints who are holy, or set apart for him. Just like a child receives an inheritance from his parents, we will receive an inheritance from our Father God. This inheritance, or great wealth, is that God freely saves us and gives us a full life with him, even though we do not deserve it. God also says that he gives us strong power to believe in him and follow him.

Paul wants the believers to understand what God is showing them. Paul uses a word picture to describe this. The picture Paul uses is of a bright light shining into a dark place. The bright light is like spiritual wisdom and insight. The dark place is like the hearts of the believers. For the Ephesian believers the heart was the center of emotions and understanding.

Stop here and tell a story about a person who loves someone very much. Listen to the storyteller. What part of the body does the storyteller use to describe this emotion? Some cultures might use the stomach or the liver rather than the heart. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and hide some things in a dark place. Then go to the dark space. Ask the participants to find the things you have hidden. Then turn on several bright lights so that there is no shadow in the room and ask the participants to find these hidden things. Discuss the difference that light makes. Pause this audio here.

Now Paul begins to teach the believers. Paul describes this power God has given us. God helps us in powerful ways. This is truly great power! God raised Jesus from the dead, so we know that God has power that we cannot even imagine. Paul says that God gives this same power to those who follow Jesus. Paul reminds the believers that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God, which is the most important and powerful place in God's kingdom.

Stop here and tell a story about the most important person in your village or area. Describe where this person now sits. Where would the king or leader of the country want this person to sit if he has the highest honor or position in the kingdom? In your home, where would you place the most important guest? Pause this audio here.

Paul reminds the believers that Jesus is more powerful or stronger than any other ruler or power or authority both on earth and in the heavenly places. Jesus is stronger now, and Jesus will always be stronger than any other spiritual being. When Paul talks about rulers in the heavenly places, Paul was talking about spiritual powers like angels or demons. Paul says that Jesus is more powerful than even the most important of these spiritual beings. For believers living in Ephesus and the surrounding area, this fact was very important. There was a very important pagan temple in Ephesus. Everyone could see this temple from anywhere in the city. Before becoming believers, most of these believers would have worshiped at that pagan temple and followed magic and sorcery. Now, Paul wants to remind the Ephesian believers that Jesus has far more authority than the evil spirits related to this pagan temple worship. Paul knows about the evil spirits in Ephesus because Paul spent time in Ephesus. The story of Paul's time in Ephesus is in the book of Acts.

Paul tells the believers all the honors that God has given Jesus. Paul says that God has given Jesus all authority over everything and completes everything. God has done this for the benefit of the church. Then Paul uses another word picture. Paul describes a human body with a head, body, and feet. God has placed everything under Jesus' feet. Paul says that Jesus is the head or chief of the church. The church is the body of Christ.

Stop here and discuss the following question. Tell a story about a time when you or other believers had to make choices about which powerful god or authority you would trust and follow. How did you or they determine who was more powerful?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 1:15-23 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 2 parts.

In the first part: Paul starts a new prayer for the believers. Paul prays that their hearts will be filled with light so that they can understand the gift of hope that they have been given.

In the second part: Paul continues by telling the followers of Jesus about the power that they now have as believers. This power is greater than any other power, even greater than the power of the spirits that they can't see. Paul also reminds them that Jesus has authority over everything.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Ephesian believers
- God who inspires Paul to write and receives Paul's requests
- Jesus who has authority over everything
- Spiritual forces in the world

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the previous section, Paul talked about the wonderful things that God had done for the believers. Paul starts this section by praying for the believers. Paul says that he is praying for them because of all the good things God has done. Paul says that he has heard two things about the believers. First, Paul has heard that the believers have faith in Jesus, or trust Jesus. Paul has also heard that the believers love God's people, or those who follow God. Every time Paul prays, he thanks God for the believers. Paul says that he prays to the God of "our Lord, or master, Jesus Christ." God is glorious, or majestic and full of power, and God is like a Father to us.

Stop here and discuss the title for Jesus that Paul gives him: "Lord Jesus Christ." This is a respectful title that recognizes Jesus as our master and as God's appointed savior. How do you refer to Jesus when you are honoring him? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and tell a story about someone who has done great things. People want to praise this person. Listen to the words of praise the storyteller uses. Now decide how you will say the title of God that Paul uses in this passage. Pause the recording here.

Paul asks God, our Glorious Father, to give the believers two things. Paul asks God to give the believers spiritual wisdom, or wisdom from God. Paul also asks God to give the believers revelation. Paul wants God to reveal himself and what he does to the believers.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you talk about God revealing to people who he is and what he does? Pause this audio here.

Perhaps the way that God does that is to "open the eyes of their heart." This is special language—Paul is asking God to show the believers truth and information about God, like a light shows things more clearly when it shines in a dark place.

Stop here and discuss: "Open the eyes of the heart" is a word picture. Another word picture that gives the same idea is "fill the heart with light." The Ephesians believed that emotions lived in the heart, or that the heart was the center of emotions and understanding. What word picture would you use in your culture that says the same thing? You might tell a story in which you are praying that someone will understand something important. Listen to see how you talk about understanding something important or revealing new truth to someone. Pause the audio here.

Then Paul explains what he wants the believers to know: Paul wants the believers to understand the hope of their calling to follow God. This means that God is inviting the believers to trust that God will save them and give them full life forever with God. Paul also wants the believers to understand that God is giving his holy people, or saints, an inheritance, or everything God has. This is just like a father gives his children everything he has. It is like great riches, but here God is not giving us money! God is giving us his great and strong power.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a time you eagerly expected something great to happen to you. Pay attention to the words you use to talk about that. Pause this audio here.

In the second part of this passage, Paul tells the believers what he wants them to remember about God and Jesus. We know that God can give us great power, because we have seen what God has done for Jesus. God raised Jesus from the dead! And, even more, God seated Jesus at the place of honor at his right hand in heaven, where God lives. Jesus is above all authority, all rulers, all power, and all dominion or rule. Jesus is above every other name that people will ever use to gain power. Remember that these things are all the different kinds of spiritual authorities. Jesus has authority over all of the spiritual world, including any spiritual beings not mentioned. Jesus has this authority now, but he also has this authority forever—in the future when God finally destroys all evil.

Stop here and discuss the power that Jesus and the believers have. How does knowledge of this power help your people to understand that Jesus has more power than any other spiritual being? Pause the audio here.

Paul uses special language again here to tell us that God gave Jesus authority over everything. God placed "all things under Christ's feet," which is a way to say that everything is "under" Jesus. Nothing is as important as Jesus. God made Jesus the "head" of the body. Paul compares the human body to the members of the church or groups of believers. The head of a physical body controls the body. In the same way, Jesus controls the church. The body, or the church, is "the fullness of Jesus who fills everything in every way." Most likely, Christ fills or completes the church with his life and power, because Christ fills or gives power to everything. It is possible that the church also completes Christ, or shows the completeness of Christ to the world.

Stop here and discuss this word picture of the head and the body. How do you describe this word picture to your people? Remember that the head directs the body in everything that the body does. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss what the church does when Christ "fills" or "completes" it. How do you know when Christ fills a church? What do they do to show that? Pause this audio here.

Now the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of the characters.

As you begin to retell the story of these verses, remember Paul shows that he is talking to the believers, and God and Jesus are standing nearby. A group of spiritual forces in the world are also standing nearby. Paul shows them that he is happy because he has heard that the believers trust Jesus and love people. Then Paul shows that he is asking God to show the believers important truths about himself. Paul should show that before, the believers did not see everything about God's plan, but now, Paul asks God to show the believers the full truth of God. The believers can show that they are discovering God's inheritance for them and God's great power for them.

Now Paul turns to the believers. Paul explains about God's power to them. God and Jesus are standing next to each other, and Paul shows the believers that God raised Christ, our Savior, from the dead. Then Paul shows that Christ is sitting next to God in heaven where they live, on the right side of God. Jesus shows that Jesus rules over all the spiritual forces in the world. Show that these spiritual forces are below Jesus, or under his authority.

Now Paul explains that Jesus is the head, or leader, of the church. Show that Jesus is a good leader. Show Christ Jesus filling the church with his presence—perhaps Christ could come and stand among the believers as the believers show what they do as a church together.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 1:15–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has 2 scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Ephesian believers
- God who inspires Paul to write and receives Paul's requests
- Jesus who has authority over everything
- Spiritual forces in the world

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 scene one, Paul begins a new prayer. Paul tells the Ephesians that Paul prays for them every time Paul prays to God. As Paul prays, Paul thanks God for the believers. Paul also prays that the God of Glory will give the Ephesians spiritual wisdom. Paul wants the believers to grow in their understanding or knowledge of God. Paul uses the word picture of light filling a space so that there are no shadows. This picture helps the believers recognize how they can understand the hope that God has given them.

Pause the drama.

Ask Paul, "How is it that you can pray constantly for these people?" You may hear, "I spend hours each day praying for those who believe in Jesus. I've lived in Ephesus and I know the difficulties the believers there face, with that pagan temple and pagan worship. I pray that God will give them the strength to remain strong. The more they understand about God and what God has done for them, the better they will be. Even when I'm working or walking, I pray for those I love."

Ask the Ephesian believers, "How does it make you feel to know that Paul prays for you constantly?" You may hear, "I like knowing that Paul remembers me and prays for me and my family even when Paul isn't here. I try to follow Jesus and learn more, but sometimes it's hard. Knowing that Paul is praying for me helps me grow stronger in my faith."

Ask God, "How do you feel when you hear Paul's prayers?" You may hear, "Paul has understood that it is important to remain in communication with me. I wish all believers would do the same as Paul and spend time every day in prayer. I have told the people that prayer is important, and Paul demonstrates through his actions that prayer is important. I like talking with those who follow me."

In scene two, Paul continues to pray. Paul wants God to help the believers to understand that they have power. This power is the same power that God used to raise Jesus from the dead. Paul tells the Ephesians that this power is far greater than the power of any other spirit beings, even those spirit beings that they can't see.

Pause the drama.

Ask the believers, "How do you feel when you hear about this power that you have?" You may hear, "I am so glad that Paul has reminded us of this power. Paul told us about this power but it is easy to forget that I have it when I see that pagan temple every day and I see and hear the magicians in the market. When my child is sick, I sometimes forget that I have this power. I'm glad that Paul is reminding me to use the power that God gives me and not go to the magicians."

Paul reminds the believers that God has made Jesus the highest authority. God has put all things under the authority of Jesus. That includes everything we have in the present world and in the world to come. God has also made Jesus the leader or head of the church. The church is the body of Christ.

Pause the drama.

Ask the believers, "How do you feel about Jesus having this authority?" You may hear, "I'm glad Jesus has this authority. I want to remember this the next time I hear someone talking about the authority of a pagan god or an evil spirit. Jesus has more authority. If I can remember that, I will be safe from those evil spirits."

Ask Paul, "Why do you think it is important to remind the believers that Jesus is the head of the church and they are the body of the church?" You may hear, "I want them to listen to the voice of Jesus tell them what to do in the church. I've seen what happens when believers become divided in their understanding, beliefs, and actions. As long as they remember that Jesus is the head and tells them what to do, they will stay strong. Jesus loves the church and wants the church to grow in faith and be strong."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 1:15–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Paul talks about the **faith** of the Ephesians, or how they trust the Lord Jesus. Faith is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for faith that you have in previous translations.

Paul uses the title **Lord Jesus Christ** throughout this passage. This title means that Jesus is God. Lord is a respectful title that shows that Jesus is master, and really is God. Christ refers to Jesus' position as Messiah, or the savior that God promised to send. Lord and Christ are discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for Lord and Christ that you have used in previous passages.

Paul uses the word **saint** to refer to anyone who believes in Jesus as Savior and Lord. Saints are people who are holy, or set apart for God's service. Use the same word for saints you have used before, and remember that saints is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Paul calls God the God of **Glory** or the Glorious Father, meaning that God is full of majesty and power. Use the same word for glory that you used in the previous passage, and remember that glory is discussed in the Master Glossary. This letter to the Ephesians is the only place in scripture where we find this exact title for God.

Paul asks God to give the believers spiritual **wisdom**, or a **spirit** or attitude of wisdom. Paul wanted the believers to think things that are true and do things that are good. Because this is spiritual wisdom, their understanding of spiritual truths would come from God. Use the same word for wisdom that you have used in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for more information.

God has given his saints his glorious, or wonderful, **inheritance**. Use the same word for inheritance that you used in the previous passage.

God put Jesus at God's right hand, which is the place of honor. God gave Jesus authority over everything or every power on earth and everything in the **heavenly realms**, or kingdoms. Use the same expression for heavenly realms, or kingdoms, that you have used in previous passages. The Ephesians believed that the heavenly realms had different layers with God being in the highest layer. In between the earth and the highest layer of heaven lived spirit beings, here called the heavenly rulers, authorities, powers, and lords or masters. These descriptions of spirit beings all mean the same thing. They do not refer to spirits that are necessarily good or evil beings. Jesus has authority over all spirit beings, both good and evil, except for God the Father himself. Use the same word for **heaven** as you have used in previous passages, and remember that heaven is in the Master Glossary.

Paul talked about the authority of Christ over the **church**. The word church means a group of people who believe in Jesus as their savior. These people meet together to worship God, pray, and study God's Word. The word church does not refer to a building.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word you will use for **church**. Use the same word for church that you have used in previous books of the Bible, and see the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Jesus is the head of the church, and the church is Jesus' body. This word picture shows how Jesus has complete authority over all that the church does.

Stop here and decide how you will explain that Jesus has authority over the church.

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.

Ephesians 1:15–23

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (7935979 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 4](#)
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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Ephesians 2:1–10

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 2:1–10 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 2:1–10 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 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 Ephesians 2:1–10 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the previous passage Paul talked about the power that God gave believers, and how God gave Jesus Christ all authority because Jesus has all power over evil spirits. Now Paul contrasts our lives before we became followers of Jesus with our lives after we became followers. Before we became followers, it was like we were dead, and after, it is like we are fully alive. Only God can do this!

Paul tells the Gentiles what their life was like before they became followers of Jesus. Paul says they followed the ruler of the kingdom of the air. The ruler of the kingdom of the air is Satan, or the devil. People believed that Satan and evil spirits ruled the lowest heaven or the air around them. This is far below God's kingdom where God and the angels live. Paul tells the Gentiles that Satan leads people to disobey God's commandments. When people live in this way, they are like dead people. Dead people cannot respond to God. Paul says that we all used to be like this. All of us behaved just like those people who chose to disobey God. Paul has been talking to the Gentiles, but now Paul includes himself and the Jewish believers when Paul says that we all followed our sinful nature.

Paul talks about our sinful nature. Another way of describing this is to talk about the selfish desires of our bodies and minds. When Paul talks about our nature, Paul is talking about the way we were born. Paul is saying that all of us did just what we wanted to do. We did whatever our minds imagined or whatever our bodies wanted us to do. You could say that we followed the natural desires we have as people. Because of these choices, we all deserved God's wrath. God's wrath or anger is the emotion that God feels when God sees someone sin or disobey Him. Wrath is God's hatred of sin because God is holy, or pure, and just. All of us deserved that wrath just like everyone who does not follow Jesus. However, we also know that God has mercy for those who follow Jesus.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group. Tell a story about someone who has disobeyed God and has lots of pride. Listen to how the storyteller describes this person. What words would you use to describe the sinful nature of this individual? Pause the audio here.

Paul talks about what God does for people when they become followers of Jesus. Firstly, God gives us new life because he loves us so much. Paul says we were dead because of our sins. This means that in God's eyes, we were like dead people.

Now Paul talks about the opposite of death—life! God brought Jesus back to life. God gives us life in the same way. God does this because he is rich in mercy, or full of mercy. God shows kindness to someone who is in need. Paul tells the believers that they only have this new life because of God's grace. In other words, God gives us things we don't deserve.

Paul goes even further—we are not only fully alive now, but we rule with Christ! Paul tells the followers of Jesus that God has united us, or put us together with Christ. Paul says that Christ sits with God in the heavenly realms. This means that as believers we also sit with God in heaven. Heaven is where God lives and rules. When a person is seated with God, that means that they help rule with God, and they share in the glory, or power and majesty, of Christ. We know that someday all believers will rule with Christ, but Paul is saying that even now, although we still live on this earth, we share in Christ's power and majesty. God did this so that in all the years to come the whole world will see how rich God is. They will not see this richness as wealth in money, but as wealth in kindness. Again, Paul emphasizes that God gives his people wealth in a different way than money.

Paul is showing the opposite of our dead, sinful nature, and showing how God gives us life.

Now Paul summarizes this difference between being spiritually dead and becoming spiritually alive. He reminds the believers that God's life is a gift. God gives us this gift even though we do not deserve it. We get this gift because we have faith, or believe in God. We can't boast or say that we received God's life because we are good people or did anything special to deserve it.

Stop here and review some of the stories of Jesus where Jesus forgave someone's sins or healed a person just because the person believed. That person did nothing to earn this forgiveness or healing. How does Paul's teaching explain what happened when the person met Jesus? Pause the audio here.

Paul emphasizes again the contrast between being dead and being alive. He says that believers are God's masterpiece. The Ephesians had many gifted craftsmen and artists who made beautiful statues and other pieces of art. But the statues were not alive. Paul uses this same idea of an artist or craftsman when saying that the believers are God's masterpiece. God is the artist, and he has made us what we are now as believers. We are not stone idols or statues. We are alive. God is the creator. God has created us anew in Jesus. God did this so that we, the believers, can do the good things that God planned for us to do. God made this plan from the beginning of the world.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 2:1–10 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 starts by talking to the Gentiles. Paul explains how people are spiritually dead when they follow Satan's ways and disobey God. Paul then includes himself and the Jews and explains that everyone disobeys God and listens to Satan. This is the way they lived before they believed in Jesus.

In the second part: Paul explains the richness of God's mercy. When God raised Jesus from the dead, God gave life to those who believed in Jesus. God did this because of God's grace and kindness. Because of this, those who believe in Jesus will be seated with Jesus in heaven and rule with Jesus.

In the third part: Paul explains that salvation comes only from God's grace. No one can earn salvation or eternal life with God. Believers are God's masterpiece. God has given believers new life so that believers can do the good things God planned for us to do.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God who inspires Paul to write this letter
- Jesus Christ
- The Ephesian believers, both Gentiles and Jews
- Satan, or the ruler of the kingdom of the air

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first part of this passage, as Paul begins this section, Paul talks to the Gentiles. Then Paul changes his way of talking so that Paul includes both the Gentiles and the Jews in the teaching about what God has done for them.

Stop here and discuss. Tell a story that involves two groups of people. Have the storyteller start by talking directly to one group. Then the storyteller should include himself and the other group of people as he continues telling the story. Now discuss how the storyteller changed from talking about you to talking about us. Pause the audio here.

First Paul talks about how the believers used to be spiritually dead because they disobeyed God. They were just like the rest of the people before they believed in Jesus. They followed Satan. Paul talks about Satan and the way Satan works in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. Some translations use the name Satan. Other translations talk about the ruler of the powers of the air or the ruler of the kingdom of the air. One translation

says the commander of the powers in the unseen world. The kingdom of the air, or the unseen world, is the place where those beings that we can't see exist, such as evil spirits. Satan rules over the evil spirits.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you describe the person in charge of evil beings that we cannot see? What is this person's name? Tell a story about this person. Listen to the storyteller to see if the storyteller uses a name or a description. Pause this audio here.

In the second part of this passage, Paul contrasts how the followers of Jesus used to be dead, but now they are alive. Paul tells the Ephesian followers of Jesus that it was like they were dead when they were disobeying God. Paul means that they were spiritually dead and would not be with God forever when they died. Now that the followers of Jesus believe in Christ, it is like they are truly alive. God gave them spiritual life when God raised Christ from the dead. That means that now, believers in Jesus will live with God forever, even after they die.

Stop here and discuss: Tell a story about someone who was spiritually dead but came to life again when they believed. Listen carefully to the storyteller. What words or ideas does the storyteller use to explain this idea so that people understand that someone can be spiritually dead and physically alive at the same time? Pause the audio here.

Paul continues telling the believers about their new life in Christ. Paul reminds them that they did not earn or deserve this new life. They have this new life because God in his grace gave it to them. Paul tells them that they will be seated with God in heaven because they are united with Christ. When someone is united with someone else, they follow that person and trust them. When we are united with Christ, we will sit next to God and Christ and we will rule with Christ from the place where God rules. God wants to show to the people in the future that he has grace—that he is kind and gives people so many good things that they do not deserve.

In the third part of this passage, Paul tells the believers again that their salvation comes only from God's grace. Paul repeats this teaching because it is such an important truth. The believers did not do anything except believe. Salvation is not a reward for their good works. Paul says that God has created us as new creatures. God made us new creatures who are fully alive and rule with Christ so that we can do the good things God planned for us to do from the beginning of the world.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. Select people or objects to represent each of the characters. As Paul begins talking, have Paul point to the Gentiles. Show how the Gentiles follow the Kingdom of the Air, or Satan. Then Paul includes himself and the Jews along with the Gentiles as Paul explains the way we used to live. Have Paul, the Gentiles and the Jews move together for this speech.

Pause here and discuss how to show that people are spiritually dead. Pause the audio here.

Then have Paul point to God as Paul explains the good things that God has done for the believers. As Paul says this, show God giving his riches to people in the form of good things. As Paul mentions each thing, have that person act it out. For example, God raised Jesus from the dead. God raised the believers from their spiritual death. God has seated the believers with God in the heavenly realms. The believers are united with Christ, so Christ invites the believers to sit with him next to God.

Have Paul point first to God and then to the believers as Paul tells them again that their salvation comes from God's grace. They have done nothing and cannot do anything to earn their salvation. Salvation is not a reward for good works. God has created us as new creatures so that we can do the good things that God has planned for us to do. These new creatures are alive and with God because God has made them alive. These new creatures are God's masterpiece. Show the believers doing things that people who are alive and following God would do. This should show a big contrast between when you acted like you were spiritually dead, and now when you are acting alive.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 2:1–10 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
- God who inspires Paul to write this letter
- Jesus Christ
- The Ephesian believers, both Gentiles and Jews
- Satan, or the ruler of the kingdom of the air

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 Gentile believers. Paul reminds them that before, they were spiritually dead because they had disobeyed God. Paul says that they lived just like everyone else when they followed Satan and obeyed what Satan said to do. Then Paul explains how Satan works. Paul includes himself and the Jewish believers along with the Gentile believers when Paul says that we all lived like that. Paul said it was because we each have a sinful nature. As a result of our actions, we deserved God's wrath or God's punishment.

Pause the drama.

Ask Paul, "How are you feeling about these things? You may hear, "I used to feel guilty because although I tried really hard to follow God's law, I could never succeed. I disobeyed God just like everyone else. I was full of pride and selfish desires. I know that I have a sinful nature just like everyone else. I couldn't do enough good works to overcome that sinful nature. It is impossible to earn this salvation."

Ask the Gentile believers, "How do you feel when you hear Paul include himself and the Jewish believers when Paul talks about the sinful nature?" You may hear, "I'm relieved! Now, I understand. It doesn't matter what your background is or the religion you followed. Every one of us disobeyed God. We are all equal in our disobedience. That means we are all the same in God's eyes. God doesn't see me differently from the others. God saw me as dead and then when I believed in Jesus, God saw me as alive. This is such good news for all of us."

Paul tells the believers that God gave the believers new life when they became followers of Jesus. God did this because he is full of mercy and because he loves the believers so much. This is spiritual life. Paul tells them that their salvation is through God's grace because God wanted to give them the gift of life. God has seated the believers with God in heaven. The believers are united with Jesus Christ. God will show others what God has done for those who believe. People in the future will know that we are united with Christ Jesus because of God's grace and kindness.

Pause the drama.

Ask the Jewish believers, "How do you feel when you hear that salvation is by God's grace?" You may hear, "This is wonderful news. I've heard it before but I'm so glad that Paul is reminding us. I can't believe this! I don't deserve to sit with Jesus in heaven! I'm very thankful." Or, "I can't imagine sitting with God in heaven. Paul is telling us many wonderful things that I never imagined could happen. I don't fully understand what this means."

Paul continues talking about God's grace and how we get to sit with God in heaven. Paul reminds all the believers that they did absolutely nothing to earn their salvation. God gave it to them even though they didn't deserve it. Their salvation is not a reward for their good deeds. Anyone who believes in Jesus will be saved. Paul says that this is so that no one can brag about their good deeds. Paul also tells the believers that God has made them into new creatures, or good works of art, so that they can do the good things that God has planned for them to do.

Pause the drama.

Ask the believers again, "How do you feel when you hear Paul talk about this gift you have received?" You may hear, "We have people coming here all the time telling us that we have to do certain things to please God. We have people telling us that belief isn't enough. When we hear that over and over, it's hard to remember what Paul told us before. I'm so glad that Paul is repeating this so that me and all my friends can remember it. All we need to do is believe in Jesus. When we do that, God gives us new life." Or, "This makes me the same as all the other believers. Some were really good people or they seemed to me like they were good people. I wasn't. I did really bad things. But it seems like whether you tried to be good or lived like me, we all are saved by believing in Jesus. It doesn't matter what kind of life I lived. God now sees me as spiritually alive and just like the others, and it's just because I believed. I'm so glad."

Ask the believers how they feel about doing the good things that God planned for them to do. You may hear, "I do these things to please God or to thank God. I do these things because I want to do them for God. I'm so glad to know that these things are the result of my salvation. I can't do good things to earn my salvation. But I can do good things to thank God for saving me. It's a part of how I show my love for God."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 2:1–10 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Christ is used throughout this passage. Christ is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for Christ that you have been using.

Paul talks about our sins and our trespasses. **Sin** means that you disobeyed God or refused to listen to God's commandments. **Trespass** means that you have gone beyond the limits of what is right or moral. You have broken the will or law of God by some failure or action. Sin and trespass often go together and there is very little difference in meaning. Sin is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss the word you will use for **sin**. You may use the same word for sin that you have been using. Discuss the word you will use for **trespass**. If you have used this word before, use the same word here. Pause the recording here.

Paul talks about how **Satan** works in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. Devil or Satan is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and decide if you are going to use the name **Satan** or **devil** or if you are going to use the name that Paul uses. Paul calls him the "ruler of the powers of the air" or the "prince of the powers of the air." If you use the title Paul uses, how can you make it clear that you are talking about Satan? You may use the title that you have used in other translations for Satan. Pause the audio here.

Satan is a **spirit**. Spirit is discussed in the Master Glossary. God created the spirits but we cannot see this spirit. Satan and the evil spirits rebelled against God.

Stop here and discuss the word for **spirit** that you will use here. It can be the same word that you have used for spirit in other translations so long as people understand that here the word is talking about a supernatural being. Pause the recording here.

Sin nature, or sinful nature, means the attitudes and desires that you were born with. This sinful nature leads us to disobey God. Everyone has this sinful nature.

Stop here and discuss the following question. How will you describe this **sinful nature**? Pause the recording here.

Because of the way we act, or our nature, we deserve for God to show his **wrath** to us. Wrath is the emotion that God has when God sees sin and evil. God is holy and just. Wrath is stronger than anger, and it involves punishing people for their sin. However, whenever God shows his wrath, he always shows his mercy, especially when God deals with his chosen people.

Stop here and discuss what word you will use for **wrath**. Wrath is discussed in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

God shows us **mercy**, or his great kindness.

Stop here and discuss what word you will use for **mercy**. Mercy is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for mercy you have used in previous books of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

God's **grace** means that God has given you something you don't deserve. Grace is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for grace that you have used in other passages.

Heavenly realms, or heavenly places, means the place where God lives and rules. Heaven is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for heaven that you have used in previous passages.

God saved us by God's grace when we believed. This means that you did nothing to earn this. You can't say that God saved you because of your good works. Often when we talk about being saved, we use the word salvation. **Salvation** means that you have been rescued from a difficult situation. Salvation is discussed in the Master Glossary. If you use the word for salvation in your translation, use the same word for salvation that you have used in previous passages.

We are God's **workmanship**, masterpiece, or handiwork. All these words mean that God has made us. God has given us new life. We used to be spiritually dead, but God has created us anew. God is the one who has done this work in us. God did this so that we can do the good things God planned for us to do.

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.

Ephesians 2:1–10

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (8983394 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Ephesians 2:11–18

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 2:11–18 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 2:11–18 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 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 Ephesians 2:11–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul has been telling the Gentile and Jewish believers that it is God's grace that saves them. Now, in this passage, Paul focuses on the peace that Jesus has brought between the two groups.

In the past the Jews had privileges with God that the Gentiles didn't have. Now God has brought the Jewish believers in Jesus together with the Gentile believers in Jesus and erased those differences. Because of God's actions, the two groups are at peace with each other and with God.

Paul starts by reminding the Gentiles of how they were once separated from God. Paul talks about circumcision, which was the sign of the covenant that God made with Abraham, the first and main ancestor of the Jewish people. When Abraham was an old man, God made a promise with Abraham that he would make Abraham's descendants into a special nation of people who would be dedicated to God. God promised to always be with his people, and his people promised to obey God. God asked Abraham and his male descendants to circumcise themselves as a sign of this special covenant with God. Circumcision was when the Jewish people cut off the loose skin of the boys' penis. The Jewish people circumcised every Jewish male just after they were born. Although some other ancient cultures also practiced circumcision, the Jews were especially proud of this symbol and the covenant that they had with God.

Gentiles were not circumcised, so they were not part of this covenant with God. They were considered outsiders. The Jews even spoke of the Gentiles in a negative way and called them the "uncircumcised." Paul continues reminding the Gentiles of how life was in the past. Paul reminds them that Jewish circumcision only affected the physical bodies of the Jewish men. This circumcision or sign of their covenant with God did not change their hearts, or make their relationship with others good.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group. Tell a story about a group of people that you consider to be outsiders or not belonging to your group. Listen to how the storyteller describes the group. Now, as a group, talk about how you feel about these outsiders. What happens in your area when the outsiders get the same privileges as the local people? Pause this audio here.

Paul then continues talking about the Gentiles and their lack of a relationship with God before they knew about Christ. Gentiles were not allowed to be citizens of Israel. Gentiles did not know about the covenant that God had with the Israelites. The Gentiles did not know about the promises that God had made to the Jewish people. The Gentiles didn't know God. The Gentiles lived in a world with no hope, which meant that they had no expectation of a future life with God after death.

Now Paul tells the Gentiles the good news! Before, the Gentiles were far away from Christ because they didn't know him. But then Christ died. Christ's blood from his death was a sacrifice just like the sacrifices of animals that the Jewish people made so that God would forgive their sins. Christ's sacrifice made it possible for both the Gentiles and the Jews to have a relationship with God, or to come close to God. When the Gentiles chose to believe in Christ Jesus, they accepted that Christ was their sacrifice, and God forgave their sins. Now the Gentiles can come close to God, or have a relationship with God!

Stop and discuss the following question. Tell a story of a time when you were accepted into a group of people and felt like you belonged to the group. How did you feel? Then discuss as a group, what do people do when they are united in Christ? Pause the audio here.

Then Paul begins to explain how Jesus Christ has changed the lives of the Gentiles and the Jews, and how Jesus has changed the relationship between the Gentiles and the Jews. Paul includes himself and the Jewish believers in this explanation. Paul says that the Gentiles and Jews who used to be separate groups are now one group. Paul uses a word picture of a wall or barrier that keeps two groups of people away from each other. This is a real wall that the people could see either in their homes or on their farms. Paul is comparing the bad feelings that the Gentiles and the Jews had always felt for each other with a wall. Paul is saying that the religious rules and laws that separated the Jews and the Gentiles were also like a wall between them. Those laws were the special laws that the Jews followed and made them think they were better than others. Circumcision is an example of one of these rules. When Jesus died it was like he broke this separating wall down and took it away. This means that Jesus took away those special rules and laws that the Jews had to follow. Now there is nothing to keep the two groups apart. So now the two groups of people are one group. Because now there is only one group, they can come near to God. Paul wants the two groups to see how, before, they were divided by that wall of bad feelings.

Stop here and look at a picture of a wall or barrier that divides people or property. Discuss a time that you saw a barrier between different people groups or groups of people. What were the differences in the groups that made the barrier? What do people do to cause hostility or make bad attitudes between people groups? Pause the audio here.

The Gentiles were far from God because they didn't even know him. The Jews were near to God because they were God's special people. But then Jesus came, and he told them that they could all have true peace with God because of what Jesus had done by dying. Jesus also told them that they could have peace with each other and be one special people group for God together! How could they do this? Jesus died for everyone, and when people believe that, the Holy Spirit brings them to God the Father. Now, both Jews and Gentiles are one people group—and both can have a relationship with our Father God!

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 2:11–18 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 2 parts.

In the first part: Paul reminds the Gentiles of the rules that separated them from the Jews before they became believers. God has taken away the rules that kept the two groups separated. Now the Gentiles can come to God and belong to God's people because Jesus died for them too.

In the second part: Paul describes how Jesus brings peace and unity between the Gentiles and the Jews. These two groups are now one people. Jesus has ended the system of laws that separated these two groups. Jesus has made peace between the two groups. Because of what Jesus has done, the Jews and Gentiles now have equal access to God through the Holy Spirit.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God, who inspires Paul to write the letter
- Jesus
- The Holy Spirit
- Jews
- Gentiles

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first part of this passage, Paul reviews for the Gentiles what their lives were like before they became followers of Jesus Christ. According to Jewish law, someone was born a Gentile or a Jew. In other words, you inherited your status from your parents. Jewish parents circumcised their boys and Gentile parents did not. Now Paul lists the things that the Gentiles did not have, in contrast to the Jews, because they were not circumcised, or part of God's special people group. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant that the Jews had with God. Therefore, the Gentiles were excluded from this covenant. The Gentiles didn't know about the promises that God had made to the Jews. The Gentiles were not citizens of Israel. The Gentiles lived without God and without hope of a future life with God. All these things made the Gentiles far from God. But now that they are believers, everything has changed. The blood of Christ has brought the Gentiles near to God just like the Jews were near to God.

In the second part of this passage, Paul talks about how Jesus has brought peace to the Jews and the Gentiles. Before, there was a dividing wall of hostility between the two groups. This means that the two groups felt like they were enemies. Jesus broke down this wall of hostility.

Jesus ended the system of laws and regulations that separated the Jews and the Gentiles. Jesus made peace between the two groups. Jesus did this by uniting the two groups into one group. Then taking this one group, Jesus brought both groups into a good relationship with God. Jesus did this by dying on the cross. Jesus destroyed the wall of hostility between the two groups, meaning that he brought the two groups together.

Stop here and discuss this wall of hostility that divides two people groups. How will you describe this wall of hostility so that your people will understand this? How will you describe how Jesus made one people group out of two people groups? Pause this audio here.

Jesus brought peace to the Gentiles who were far from God because they were not part of God's people. Jesus brought peace to the Jews who were near to God because they were God's special people. You may need to make it clear in your translation why the Gentiles were far away and why the Jews were not far away from God. Both groups, now one group, can go to God the Father through the one Spirit—the Holy Spirit. Remember that these two groups are the Jewish people and the non-Jewish people. Now, the group that the two groups make together are one kind of group. Jesus made it possible for two very different groups to come together into one group.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. Select people or objects to represent each character.

Show which people are Gentiles and which people are Jews. The Gentiles should be outside the group of Jews. Before believing in Jesus, the Gentiles were outsiders. When Paul talks about the covenant, or his promise with the Jews, God should be with the Jews. Have the Gentiles move so that they are far from God. Then when Paul says that the Gentiles have now been united with Jesus Christ, have the Gentiles and Jesus move so that they are standing together. Then when Paul says that the blood of Jesus has brought the Gentiles close to God, have the Gentiles move next to God. However, the Gentiles and Jews should still be separate from each other.

In the second part of this passage, Paul talks about the wall of hostility between the Jews and Gentiles. Have the Jews and Gentiles stand in separate groups and look at each other with anger and hostility. It would be good to put something as a barrier or wall between the two groups. Then when Paul talks about the wall being broken, move the barrier away so that the two groups can move together. As Paul says Jesus Christ created one new people, have the Jews and Gentiles move together to form one people. As Paul explains how Christ has reconciled or brought the two groups together to God, have Christ act out what he does to bring them together. Now the hostility between the two groups has gone. As Paul says this, the two groups having now formed one group should show in culturally appropriate ways that they love each other and are one group.

Paul finishes by pointing to the Holy Spirit and says that the Holy Spirit leads us all to God because of what Jesus has done for us. Have the Holy Spirit lead the whole group to God.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 2:11–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has 2 scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God who inspires Paul to write the letter
- Jesus
- The Holy Spirit
- Jews
- 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.

In scene one, Paul reminds the Gentiles that they used to be outsiders or separated from the Jews and from God. Paul explains that the Jews called the Gentiles the uncircumcised because the Gentiles did not know about the covenant relationship that the Jews had with God. The Gentiles did not know about the covenant promises that God had made to the Jews. The Gentiles lived in a world without God. The Gentiles had no hope. But then the Gentiles heard about and believed in Jesus. Now that they believe, they have been united with Jesus. The blood of Jesus Christ has brought the Gentiles near to God.

Pause the drama.

Ask Paul, "Why do you want to remind the Gentiles of all the things they didn't have?" You may hear, "They need to know all that God has done for them. I told them that their salvation was by grace and not because of anything they did. That salvation has changed their lives. They need to remember how it was for them before so that they can understand just how much Jesus has done for them. Now, in God's eyes, they are the same as the Jews. They have been made one people."

Ask the Gentiles, "How do you feel when you remember what life was like for you before you believed in Jesus?" You may hear, "That feels so strange and far away. I'm so glad we aren't living like that anymore. It's true, we didn't know anything about the covenant promises or how to have a relationship with God. That makes me sad for all those people who still don't know these things. But for me, I'm so glad that Jesus has made me one with the Jews and that God sees me as one of His own. We are not different. We are one people—God's people. I think it's important for all of us to know these things because people come here and try to tell us things that aren't true. They try to tell us that the Jews must not associate with us Gentiles. From what Paul is saying, we know how to answer those people now."

In scene two, Paul explains the wall of hostility that used to exist between the Jews and the Gentiles. Paul says that Jesus has broken down or destroyed this wall and made the Jews and Gentiles into one people. Jesus broke this wall by ending the system of the law that God had given the Jews. This law had many commandments and regulations.

Pause the drama.

Ask the Jews, "How do you feel when you hear how Jesus ended the system of the law that you have tried to follow all your lives?" You may hear, "This is such wonderful news. No one was able to keep or obey the law perfectly. I always knew that I was failing to keep the law and that this failure kept me separated from God. Now, I understand that through believing in Jesus, I have a relationship with God that doesn't depend on me

keeping all the laws and regulations. And then another blessing is that we don't have to keep separate from people around us. Jesus has made all those who believe into one people. We are all children of God together now. I don't have to look at my fellow believers as different from me." Or, "It's hard not to keep thinking I should obey every law. Sometimes I feel guilty when I don't obey the laws my parents taught me to keep as a Jew."

Paul goes on to explain that Jesus brought peace to the Jews and the Gentiles by forming them into one group. They used to be two separate people groups. Now they are one people group. Both the Jews and the Gentiles who believe have been reconciled to God. Jesus accomplished this reconciliation by dying on the cross. As a result, all hostility between the two groups has gone. Now both groups have peace. Now both groups, through the Holy Spirit, can go to God, the Father. All this is because of what Jesus Christ did.

Pause the drama.

Ask Paul, "You spent a lot of time explaining how the Gentiles and the Jews are now one group. Why is this important to you?" You may hear, "Others will come and try to separate them. Others will come and try to get the Jews to keep themselves away from the Gentiles. Others will come and try to get the Gentiles to follow the rules and regulations of the law. I want them to understand what Jesus did for them when Jesus died on the cross. I want them to know this so that they don't get caught by false teaching. I know the false teachers will come. But if they understand the true teaching now, they will recognize the false teaching and not follow it."

Ask the Gentile believers, "How do you feel when you hear Paul talking about you being joined as one group with the Jewish believers?" You may hear, "I love it that God considers me the same as them now. It was hard when I was trying to worship God but not allowed to eat with them or visit them. Now we are one family and I love it."

Ask the Jewish believers, "How do you feel when you hear Paul remind you that you are one group now?" You may hear, "Sometimes it is hard to forget the way life was. We always had to be separate, and sometimes I feel guilty when I don't keep separate from the Gentiles when eating or worshiping God. But I really like it when I can remember to put those feelings aside and just enjoy being together and worshiping God as one united people. I think it is right that Paul reminds us that God sees us as the same now."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 2:11–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Paul says that the **Gentiles** were living apart from **Christ**. Gentiles are people who are not Jews. Although the word **Jews** is not mentioned in this passage, we know that the two groups Paul is talking about are the Gentiles and the Jews. You may make that clear if you need to.

Stop here and discuss what words you will use for **Gentiles** and **Jews** if you decide to use the word Jews. Use the same words you have used in other books of the Bible. Gentiles and Jews are in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Use the same word for Christ that you have been using. Christ is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Paul talks about **circumcision**. The Jewish people circumcised their male children, which means that they cut off the loose skin at the end of the boys' penis. This was a sign of the covenant relationship they had with God.

Stop here and discuss what word you will use for **circumcision**. Circumcision is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for circumcision that you have used in previous books of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

Paul talks about how the Gentiles were not a part of the people of **Israel**, who are the Jews, or a part of the **covenant**, or strong promise, that God made between God and the Jews. The Gentiles were **foreigners**, or like outsiders from another country.

Stop here and discuss what words you will use for **Israel**, **covenant**, and **foreigners**. Israel, covenant, and foreigners are discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same words for Israel, covenant, and foreigners that you have used in previous books of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the Gentiles had no **hope**, or confident expectation, that they could belong to God. Use the same word for hope that you have used in previous passages, and remember that hope is in the Master Glossary.

Paul says that Jesus himself is our **peace**. Paul uses the word peace to mean unity and love for each other. This peace gives a fullness or completeness of life. Peace is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for peace that you have used in previous passages.

Paul talks about a dividing wall. This would be a wall that divides the property of one person from the property of another person. After talking about the physical wall that divides property, Paul talks about the wall of hostility. This is an attitude.

If needed, stop here and decide how you will describe the wall of hostility. Pause the audio here.

Jesus brought peace, ending the system of the law with its commands and regulations. When Jesus came, he took away the need for the **law** from Moses that gave many commands and regulations that people had to follow. The law refers to the law that God gave Moses for his people many years before. That law included many commands, or rules that the people had to live by. There were regulations, or rules for how to live and worship God.

Stop here and discuss how you will describe the **law** with its commands and regulations. Law and commandments are in the Master Glossary. Use the same words for law, commandments, and regulations that you have used in previous books of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

Jesus brings us all to God by killing the hostility between the two groups through Jesus' death on the **cross**. Sometimes Paul just uses the word cross to mean Jesus' death.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will describe Jesus bringing people to God through the **cross**. You may say "through his death on the cross" if you need to. Use the same word for cross that you have used in previous books of the Bible, and remember that cross is in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

All of us come to God through the same **Holy Spirit**. Use the same words for Holy Spirit you have used in previous passages. Holy Spirit is discussed 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.

Ephesians 2:11–18

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (7257720 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Ephesians 2:19–22

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 2:19–22 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 2:19–22 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 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 Ephesians 2:19–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul has been telling the Ephesians that God has united the Gentiles and the Jews in Jesus Christ so that they have become one people group. Jesus broke down the barriers that used to exist between the Jews and Gentiles. Jesus made peace between the two groups. Everyone now has access to God through the Holy Spirit. Now, Paul gives three examples to explain how God has included the Gentiles. Paul talks about strangers and foreigners in a country. Then Paul talks about a family. Finally, Paul talks about a building.

Paul explains that the Gentiles are full citizens in God's kingdom; they are no longer strangers or foreigners. Foreigners are people from another tribe or country. Strangers are people who have moved to another country and live there all the time. These aliens or strangers have some rights, but they are not full citizens of the country where they live.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you treat foreigners and strangers in your country or area? Pause the audio here.

Perhaps Paul was remembering how it was in the past when Gentiles went to the temple in Jerusalem to worship God. They were only allowed in certain parts of the temple because they were foreigners and not Jews. But Paul says that this difference has now been taken away. Earlier in this letter, Paul reminded the Gentiles that before they believed in Jesus, they were considered strangers, and they were not equal to the Jews. Now the Gentiles are equal to the Jews in God's eyes.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How does someone become a citizen of your country? When a foreign-born person becomes a citizen, how do the other citizens treat this person? What rights and privileges does the new citizen have? Pause the audio here.

Paul's second example is that of family. At the beginning of the letter, Paul reminded the Ephesians that the Gentiles had been adopted into God's own family. Paul doesn't talk about adoption in this part of the letter, but Paul says here that the Gentiles are now full members of God's family, not just servants of the family. Gentiles and Jews are brothers and sisters together in the same family. The Gentile believers have the same rights and privileges as any children in a household. They are all God's children. When Paul talks like this, Paul is telling the Jewish believers that they must see the Gentile believers as their full brothers and sisters. Paul wants each group to see the other group as equal.

Stop here and discuss how people adopt children in your culture. What rights and privileges do adopted children have? How does that compare to a child born into the family? Pause the audio here.

Finally, Paul compares the believers to the way someone builds a house using stones. Paul is describing a particular type of house that people would build in the Middle East. The builders would dig a ditch which would be the outside edge of the house and fill this ditch with stones. These stones would be the foundation which is below the level of the ground. The people would build the wall on top of these foundation stones. The builder puts down the first big, square stone in a corner. This stone would become the cornerstone. Because the cornerstone is square, the builders place every other stone so that it lines up squarely with the cornerstone. The cornerstone is the most important stone in the building. With a good cornerstone and a good foundation, the building walls are strong and will last.

Stop here and look at a picture of a stone foundation for a house. Identify the cornerstone. Pause the audio here.

Stop here and show a picture of the wall of the house that people are building with stone. Notice how the stones line up straight with the cornerstone. Pause the audio here.

Stop here and discuss the following question: How do you build houses in your culture? What do you build your houses with? What do you do to make your houses stand strong? Pause this audio here.

Paul is saying to the Ephesians that they are like a house. Paul uses this example because everyone knew how to build a house out of stone. The first thing you put down is the cornerstone. Then you put down the foundation. Then you build the stone walls on the foundation. Paul says that Jesus is like the cornerstone. That

means that everything must agree with Jesus and the teachings of Jesus. Then Paul says that the apostles and the prophets are like the foundation of the house. Perhaps this means that the apostles and the prophets carried God's message to the people, so what they taught is like the foundation of God's house. More likely, the work of the prophets, or people who taught the truth about Jesus, and the work of the apostles, or those whom Jesus sent to teach and start communities of believers, are the foundation on which believers build the church.

Stop and discuss: Why do you think Paul said that the teachings of the apostles and prophets are like the foundation of a house? Why did Paul say that Jesus is like the cornerstone of a house? Pause this audio here.

Then the believers, the Jews and the Gentiles, are God's family and are like the walls of the house. They have joined together to become a holy temple, or a special house, for the Lord God. Paul is using the image of the walls of a house to talk about how the believers join together to become a temple or house. The Lord is the highest ruler, or the master of the house. Paul repeats the teaching when Paul says that the believers are joined with Jesus Christ to form a temple with Jesus as the supreme ruler or leader of the temple. God lives in the temple. The Jewish believers already believed that God lived in the temple in Jerusalem. They went to Jerusalem to worship God. Now Paul tells them that God lives in each believer. God lives in each believer because God's Spirit lives in each believer. We can say that the believers themselves become the house for God's Spirit to live on the earth right now. Paul finishes this part of the letter by repeating to the Gentiles the good news that the Gentiles are also part of this house.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 2:19–22 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 3 parts.

In the first part: Paul compares the Gentiles to strangers and foreigners. Paul says that the Gentiles are no longer like strangers and foreigners, but they are full citizens in God's Kingdom.

In the second part: Paul says the Gentiles are full members of God's family.

In the third part: Paul used the image of building a house of stones to represent the way that the Jews and Gentiles are united in Christ to be part of the house of God.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Foreigners and strangers
- Gentile believers
- Jewish believers
- Believing prophets
- Apostles
- Jesus
- God
- The Holy Spirit

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Stop here and talk about how you build a house in your community. How is this building similar or different to the way people built houses when Paul wrote the letter? If your building style is different, how will you describe

a foundation and cornerstone so that your people understand these ideas? Look at the pictures of the cornerstone and foundation again if needed. Pause the audio here.

Stop here and practice building a small house, if this type of house is foreign to your culture. Collect some small boxes such as juice boxes to represent the stones. If you don't have juice boxes, find something else local that is small that you can use to build a wall. Then dig the ditch to put the foundation stones in place. Decide which one will be the cornerstone and put it at the corner. Then put others in place so that they are lined up with the cornerstone. Then using the pictures as a guide, build a wall. Notice that the wall lined up with the cornerstone is straight. Now describe what you have done. Pause the audio here.

This passage has three parts. In the first part of this passage, Paul talks to the Gentile believers in Ephesus. Paul reminds the Gentiles that they are no longer strangers or foreigners. Instead, the Gentile believers are now citizens with the same rights and privileges as the Jewish believers.

Stop here and discuss as a group: When you talk about people from another tribe or another country, how do you describe them? When you talk about people who have come to live in your country but have not become citizens of your country, how do you describe them? Pause the audio here.

In the second part of this passage, Paul tells the Ephesian Gentiles that they are now members of God's household. A household included everyone who belonged to and lived in a house, including all the members of the family. Paul is saying that the Gentiles belong in God's family.

In the third part of this passage, Paul uses the image of building a house made of stone with a stone foundation to help the believers understand what has happened to them. Paul says that Jesus is like the cornerstone of the house because Jesus is what makes the teachings true and right. The teachings, or work of the prophets and the apostles, are like the foundation of the house because they keep the house stable. Then the Gentile believers are united with the Jewish believers, and they form the walls of the house. This special house becomes a holy temple, or a special home for God. God lives in this holy temple by God's Holy Spirit. God lives in each believer because God's Spirit lives in each believer. We can say that the believers themselves become the house for God's Spirit to live on the earth right now. Paul ends by reminding the Gentiles that they form part of this holy temple.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will describe the comparisons of Jesus being like the cornerstone of a house, the teachings of the apostles and prophets being like the foundation of a house, and the believers being like the walls of a house for God. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. Choose someone to be each of the characters. The Jewish and Gentile believers should be in two separate groups. As Paul tells what has happened to the Gentiles, have Paul point to the Gentiles. Paul should tell the Gentiles that they are no longer foreigners but full citizens of God's kingdom. The Gentiles should recognize that this is good news when they hear it.

Then Paul tells the Gentile believers that they are now members of God's family. Have the Gentile believers move to where the Jewish believers are standing. God should move to be with all of them and show them that each person is a part of the family and welcomed in the family.

Then Paul uses the word picture of building a house. As Paul talks about each section of the house as they are building it, have the characters move. Have Jesus move to be the cornerstone of the house. Then the prophets and apostles should move to line up squarely with Jesus to form the foundation. Then the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers should unite together to form the walls of the house. As the people move to build the wall, have Paul point to them to explain how the builder is carefully joining them together so that they form a holy temple. The Jewish believers should move together with the Gentile believers in such a way that you cannot tell that there is a difference between them. Then have the Holy Spirit move to live in the holy temple.

God's Holy Spirit lives in this temple, meaning that God's Holy Spirit lives inside the believers in him.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 2:19–22 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
- Foreigners and strangers
- Gentile believers
- Jewish believers
- Believing prophets
- Apostles
- Jesus
- God
- 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 part one, Paul starts this passage by telling the Gentiles that they are no longer foreigners or aliens or strangers.

Pause the drama.

Ask the Gentiles, "How do you feel now that you know that the Jewish believers no longer see you as a foreigner or stranger?" You may hear, "I feel like I am a part of God's family now. I can go to my friend's house and share a meal with them and my friend can come to my house and share a meal. It's like we are the same. The differences have gone and this feels so good. I feel like I belong somewhere."

In part two, Paul says that the Gentiles are now members of God's family. The Gentiles have the same rights and privileges as the Jewish believers.

Pause the drama.

Ask Paul, "Why do you keep reminding the Gentiles that they have the same privileges as the Jewish believers? You have repeated this idea many times now in your letter." You may hear, "This is where false teaching often attacks the Gentile believers. People come and try to convince them that they are not fully in God's kingdom unless they keep the law and get circumcised and all sorts of things. I am repeating this so that they will hopefully understand that they don't have to do anything except believe. Most people know that a lesson or instruction that teachers repeat is important. I want them to fully understand this important teaching."

Ask Gentiles, "How do you feel when you hear that you are full citizens like the Jewish believers?" You may hear, "This is such good news. We have had people come here and tell us that we are not full citizens. I want to belong fully to God! Some of us have been to Jerusalem and we know how the Jews treat the Gentiles at the

temple there. Paul is saying that when we meet here for worship and to eat together we are all the same. I love hearing that."

Then in part 3, Paul uses the image of building a stone house, a common building in the Middle East, to help the believers understand this important lesson. Paul tells them that Jesus is the cornerstone of the building. Then Paul says that the teachings of the prophets and the teachings of the apostles are the foundation of the house.

Pause the drama.

Ask Jesus, "How do you feel when you hear Paul describe you as the cornerstone?" You may hear, "I am so happy that Paul has understood that the teachings I gave are the basis of the gospel. Everything the believers do must agree with my teachings. If they understand this idea and follow it, they won't go astray."

Ask the prophets and the apostles, "How do you feel when you hear that your teachings and your work are the foundation of God's holy temple?" You may hear, "I said everything that God told me to say. I warned the people to follow what God says." Or, "I've tried to teach these people all that Jesus taught me. I've tried to make sure that they know what it means to follow Jesus. These teachings should be the foundation or basis of their whole lives." Or, "Sometimes I feel so responsible to make sure that the believers understand everything God has said. It helps me feel better when I hear what Paul teaches."

Paul tells the Gentile believers and the Jewish believers that God has united them so that they can form the walls of the temple. This temple will be a holy place, a place where God lives by his Holy Spirit. The Gentiles are also part of these walls which make the House for God

Pause the drama.

Ask the Jewish believers, "How do you feel when you hear that you are united like this with the Gentile believers?" You may hear, "I like this picture. I remember that God promised Abraham that the whole world would be blessed. We Jews are not the only people in the world. We need the Gentiles to be part of us. It feels good to me to know that in God's eyes, we are now the same. Jesus has done this for us." Or, "I'm still a bit nervous. I'm so used to thinking of the Gentiles as unclean people and I'm not supposed to mix with them. This is such a new idea for me that I'm still working on seeing the Gentiles as equals with us."

Ask the Gentile believers, "How do you feel knowing that you are part of God's holy temple?" You may hear, "I like hearing this. It seems like it is important that I am part of the building of this temple. If I'm not part of it, then the wall won't be as strong as it should be. That makes me feel good. I love knowing that I'm equal to the other believers in God's eyes."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 2:19–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Although the word **Gentile** isn't in this passage, Paul talks directly to the Gentiles who are like strangers and foreigners. Some translations use the word Gentile to make sure that everyone knows that Paul is talking to the Gentiles. If you use the word Gentile, be sure to use the same word for Gentile that you have used in previous translations. Gentiles is in the Master Glossary.

Foreigner means people of another tribe or country. Strangers or sojourners are people who have moved to another country and live there all the time. These aliens or strangers may have some rights but they are not full citizens of the country where they live.

Stop here and discuss the best word to use for **foreigner** and the best word to use for stranger, or **sojourner**. Both foreigner and sojourner are in the Master Glossary. If you have translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words here. Pause the audio here.

God says that the Gentiles are now **saints**, or God's **holy** people. Any person dedicated to God is considered to be holy. Saints means holy people. The word saint and the word holy are in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for saints or holy people that you have been using.

The Gentiles are members of God's **household**. All the people living together in a house make up a household.

Stop here and discuss what word you will use for **household**. Use the same word you have used in other books of the Bible, and remember that household is in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that God builds his people on the **foundation**, or base, of the house. The foundation must be square with a cornerstone. A good house is built on a solid foundation. Use the word you have decided to use to describe the foundation of the house.

Christ Jesus is the cornerstone of the house. Use the same word for Christ that you have been using, and remember that Christ is in the Master Glossary. **Cornerstone** is the first stone laid in a foundation. The cornerstone must be square. Every part of the foundation must line up with the cornerstone so that the entire house has straight walls. The cornerstone is the most important stone.

If needed, stop here again and discuss as a group how you will describe the **foundation** and **cornerstone** of a house in your translation. Cornerstone is in the Master Glossary. If you have translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words here. Pause this audio here.

The foundation of the house is the **apostles** and **prophets**. In this passage, the prophets were the people of that time who gave God's message to the believers.

If needed, stop here and discuss what words you will use for **apostles** and **prophets**. Use the same word for apostle you used earlier in Ephesians, and the same word for prophets that you used in other books of the Bible. Apostles and prophets are discussed in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the believers become the walls of a holy **temple**, or God's House. Temple is the same word as the temple in Jerusalem where the Jews worshiped God.

Stop here and review as a group what word you use for **temple**. Use the same word you have used previously, and remember that temple is discussed in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Lord refers to the master of the house or the supreme ruler. Here, the word Lord probably refers to God. God joins us together with Jesus and it is like we are becoming a holy temple dedicated to God. However, this word, Lord, could also refer to Jesus. Lord is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for Lord as you have been using.

God lives in the temple by His **Spirit**. The Holy Spirit is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for Holy Spirit you have been using.

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.

Ephesians 2:19–22

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (9659792 KB)

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Ephesians 3:1–6

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 3:1–6 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 3:1–6 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 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 Ephesians 3:1–6 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul continues his letter to the Ephesians. As Paul starts this part of the letter, Paul begins a prayer. But just as Paul begins to pray, he thinks of some other things he wants to say and begins to explain those things instead. Paul stops his prayer and takes the time to explain to the Ephesian believers the special work that God has been telling him to do. In a later part of this letter, Paul will return to his prayer and finish it.

Paul starts this section by reminding the Ephesians that Paul is the person writing to them. Then Paul reminds the Gentiles that Paul is in prison. Paul says, "I am a prisoner because I was serving Jesus Christ by telling you, the Gentiles, the good news about Jesus." Paul is in prison in Rome. Paul was arrested when Paul went to Jerusalem after his last visit to Ephesus. Some Jews, knowing that Paul worked with the Gentiles, thought that Paul had taken a Gentile into a part of the temple where the Gentiles were not allowed to go. Paul did not do that. But because the Jews thought he did, the Jews tried to kill Paul. Paul was arrested by Roman soldiers. Eventually, the Roman government sent Paul to Rome for a trial. Paul is writing this letter to the Ephesians while he is waiting for that trial.

Paul starts praying for the Ephesian believers, but then suddenly Paul changes the subject so that he can explain more about his special role. Paul is certain that the Ephesian believers have heard about Paul's special ministry to the Gentiles. It is like God made Paul a steward for the Gentiles. A steward is a person who works for someone and handles all the responsibilities of business for that person. For example, maybe the steward works for a man who has a lot of land and property. The steward directs or manages all the other servants. The steward is in charge of the daily activities of the business. Paul says that he is a steward of the grace of God. This means that God has assigned Paul to take care of the gospel, or the good news about Jesus Christ, and Paul is working to do exactly what God has assigned him to do. Paul says that God has trusted him, Paul, to do this work. This work is to tell the Gentiles about God's grace. God's grace is that we do not deserve and did not earn God's love and salvation. We find God's grace in the good news about Jesus, because God sent Jesus to die to free us and give us eternal life with God, even though we did not deserve it.

Stop here and discuss the following question. Tell a story about someone with a large amount of property and business. Someone takes care of the land or business for the owner. The owner trusts this person who takes care of the house, property, and servants. Listen to how the storyteller describes this person and his work. Pause the audio here.

Paul tells the Ephesians that he has already written to them about his special role, which is the role of telling the Gentiles about the mystery of the grace of Christ. We do not know, but maybe this means that Paul wrote another letter before this letter and that letter has been lost. Or maybe Paul is referring to what he has already written in this letter to the Ephesians. In any case, Paul is reminding the Ephesian believers that God revealed to Paul a special revelation—God revealed to Paul the "mystery of Christ." Before Jesus, there were things that people did not know about how to get close to God, but now that Jesus has come, people know how to get close to God. Paul encourages the Ephesian believers to continue reading this letter so that they can understand how special this revelation is. For many generations before this, people did not understand or know who Jesus was. But now God has caused the Holy Spirit to reveal this plan to the people that God chose as His sent ones or spokesmen. These people God has sent are the holy, or set apart, apostles and the holy prophets. Paul is one of these special people that God sent to tell the Gentiles this good news.

After all this explanation, Paul reveals the mystery—this thing that no one has understood before. Paul uses the same comparisons here to describe this mystery that he used earlier in this letter—the comparisons of family inheritance and human bodies. Paul has already been telling the Ephesians that they are one family and have one inheritance as children of God. The Jewish people are the nation of Israel. God made a covenant many years ago with Israel that he would give them an inheritance—that God would be with them forever. Now Paul reminds the believers again that the Gentiles who believe in Jesus as their savior will have the same inheritance from God as the Jewish people. Paul has been telling the Ephesian believers that the Jewish believers and Gentile believers are like one human body. Now he tells them again that together, the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers make up a unified body of people that works together like one human body. Paul reminds the

believers that Christ promises eternal life with God forever, and both the Jews and the Gentiles will share in the benefits of Christ Jesus' promise to save them.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 3:1–6 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 begins to pray. But just after reminding the Ephesians of who he is and where he is, Paul interrupts his praying.

In the second part: Paul explains more to the Ephesians about the mystery, or secret plan, that God has revealed to Paul. This plan is that the Gentiles who follow Jesus will also receive the promises that God has already given to the Jews. Paul explains that God used His Holy Spirit to make this revelation.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- A scribe or secretary that writes down what Paul says
- God
- Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit
- Gentile believers
- Jewish believers
- Apostles and prophets
- Previous generations

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first part of this passage, Paul begins this passage by telling the Ephesians that all the good news he has just told them makes him want to pray for them! Paul says, "For this reason, I want to pray..." but Paul interrupts himself before he tells them he is going to pray. Paul reminds the Ephesians of who he is and where he is. He says, "I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus." Paul strongly emphasizes that Paul is the one writing the letter. It's as if Paul wants the people listening to the letter to think that Paul is the one reading it to them.

Stop here and tell a story about someone who writes an important letter or sends an important message to some people. In your culture, how does this person make it clear that the message is from this person and not someone else? Pause the recording here.

The Ephesian believers would know all about the reasons why Paul is in prison. Paul does not re-tell them all this. When Paul says he is a prisoner of Christ Jesus, Paul means he is in prison because he follows Christ's teachings and commandments. Jesus did not put Paul in prison—the Roman government put Paul in prison. Then Paul changes the subject. It's as if Paul suddenly thinks of something else he needs to say before continuing his prayer.

Stop here and discuss the following question. Have someone tell a story or begin to introduce a subject. Immediately the storyteller thinks of some other things he needs to say and stops the story to explain those things. Listen to the storyteller and then talk about how the storyteller changed his way of talking so that the listeners know that he is now explaining something different. Pause the audio here.

In the second part of this passage, Paul explains that God has made Paul a steward of God's grace. This means that Paul has been given special responsibilities to help the Gentiles understand and receive God's grace: God's love that we don't deserve. Another way to say this is, "God showed His kindness when God chose me to help you."

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you talk about Paul's role as a steward of God's grace? Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the Ephesians that God has revealed God's secret plan to Paul. This revelation is new. Previous generations didn't know or understand this mystery or secret. Now God has revealed this secret plan to God's holy apostles and holy prophets. God used his Holy Spirit to reveal this plan.

Then Paul tells the Ephesians what this secret plan is that God has revealed. The plan is that the Gentile believers and the Jewish believers are both able to inherit eternal life from God. They can inherit this life because of the good news about Jesus, or the gospel. Then Paul uses 3 different comparisons to describe this new relationship between the Jewish believers and Gentile believers. Firstly, Paul says that anyone, even a Gentile, who has believed the good news about Jesus is now a child of God. They are equal in God's eyes and therefore receive the same inheritance or gifts from God. Secondly, Paul says the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers form one body, like one human body that works together in unity. The third idea is that both Jewish believers and Gentile believers will receive the promise that they can have eternal life with God forever when they follow Jesus.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. Select people or objects to represent each of the characters. The Gentile believers in Ephesus, the Jewish believers in Ephesus, and people from previous generations can gather in three separate groups. As the passage starts, show God revealing his mystery to Paul and the apostles and prophets that God has set apart especially to share his good news. The Holy Spirit can move from God to Paul, to the apostles and the prophets and explain the mystery to them. Then Paul goes to prison and begins to dictate a letter to a scribe. Show that as Paul begins to pray to God, he interrupts himself and the scribe has to change what he is writing.

Now Paul turns to the Gentile believers. Paul says, "You know that God made me the steward of God's grace towards the Gentiles." The Gentiles, the Jews, and the people in other generations will look confused because they don't know what this special or secret plan is.

Then Paul explains the plan to the Gentile believers. As Paul explains that the Gentiles will inherit God's promises just like the Jews, move the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers together to form one group. They are now one body or group of people. God gives all of the believers in this one big group his good gifts. Have Jesus hand each person the same gift or inheritance or blessing. Have the believers look at their gifts and realize that both groups are receiving exactly the same thing.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 3:1–6 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
- Scribe or secretary who writes what Paul says
- God
- Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit
- Gentile believers
- Jewish believers
- Apostles and prophets
- Previous generations

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 part 1, Paul starts to say that because of the good news he has just written to them, he wants to pray.

Then in part 2, Paul interrupts his prayer to explain more to the Ephesians. Paul reminds the Ephesians that Paul is a prisoner because he was taking the gospel to the Gentiles.

Pause the drama.

Ask Paul, "How are you really feeling about being in prison just because you took the gospel to the Gentiles?" You may hear, "I don't like being in prison. No one would enjoy prison. But if I have to be in prison, I'm glad it is because I was obeying God. God called me and told me to go to the Gentiles. I'm so glad I obeyed God."

Ask the Ephesian Gentile believers, "How do you feel when you hear that Paul is in prison because Paul told the Gentiles about Jesus?" You may hear, "I am so grateful that Paul came here and told us about Jesus. I know that Paul is in prison because of his love for us, and I am sad for him. Knowing what this has cost Paul, I think I should listen even more carefully to what Paul is telling us. It is important enough that Paul was willing to risk going to prison and suffering, so it is also important that I listen and follow."

Paul begins to talk directly to the Gentiles. Paul tells them that God gave Paul special responsibilities to explain to the Gentiles about God's grace.

Pause the drama.

Ask the Gentile believers, "How do you feel now about the grace of God?" You may hear, "It's taken me a long time to understand this. To me, God's grace means that I don't have to do anything but believe in Jesus to be accepted by God. I always thought I had to work hard for God to accept me. This is such wonderful news to me! I'm happy when I hear this and I want to share this good news with others."

Paul goes on to explain that God has revealed His secret plan through the Holy Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets. They now know the secret, but previous generations didn't know the secret.

Pause the drama.

Ask the apostles and prophets, "How do you feel about receiving this secret?" You may hear, "I am honored that God has trusted me with this message. It is such wonderful news that the Gentile believers are the same in God's eyes as the Jewish believers. I understand that we couldn't know this secret until Jesus came, died, and rose again. I'm just so glad I get to be one of those who know this and I can share it with others."

Then Paul explains the secret, or mystery, that God has revealed. This secret is that the Gentile believers are part of God's family. The Gentile believers are God's children just like the Jewish believers. The two groups now form one family. The Gentile believers will inherit God's gifts in the same way as the Jewish believers. There will be no difference in the inheritance. Because both groups belong to Jesus Christ, they are God's children and God considers them the same.

Pause the drama.

Ask the Jewish believers, "How do you feel when you hear that these Gentile believers inherit the same things from God as you?" You may hear, "At first I didn't know what to think or feel. They have never obeyed the law. They are not descendants of Abraham. I couldn't understand how this could be. But now I see that believing in Jesus changes everything. I don't have to keep the law anymore. I feel free! Keeping the law doesn't make me one of God's children. Believing in Jesus makes me God's child. Since that is all that is required, I can accept them as brothers and sisters and be glad that we are one family. I'm glad that we can be together and not have division between us."

Ask the Gentile believers, "How do you feel when you hear that you will inherit the same things as the Jewish believers will?" You may hear, "This is such good news. I've wanted to be one family with them for a long time but there was always that separation because I didn't follow the same religious laws. I knew I couldn't fully participate with them even when I believed in God. But now, we all understand that believing is all that is required and we are now brothers and sisters because we believe. Just like any family, we all inherit equally. I'm so glad to know this. I'm so glad I can meet with them, eat with them and we can pray together."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 3:1-6 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Paul says he is a **prisoner** of **Christ** Jesus for the sake of the **Gentiles**. Paul means that he is in prison in Rome because he was telling the Gentiles about Jesus. The word prisoner here means someone who is in jail or prison. Christ and Gentiles are discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same words for Christ and Gentiles that you have been using.

Paul says that God gave Paul the **stewardship** of God's grace or special responsibilities. A steward is a person who takes care of the daily routine of a house or business. A steward pays the rents and salaries, hires people and generally makes sure that all runs well. Stewardship means that the person is doing the things that a steward should do. Some translations talk about stewardship and other translations talk about "special responsibilities."

If needed, stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate the idea of stewardship or special responsibilities that God has given Paul. Pause this audio here.

Paul has the responsibility of telling the Gentiles that God's **grace**, or undeserved love, is for them also. Grace is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for grace that you have been using.

Paul says that God has revealed the **mystery** of Christ to Paul. The mystery of Christ means God's secret plan or hidden plan for the Gentiles. When Paul is talking about a mystery, he is talking about a divine secret that God is now revealing to people. God makes this secret or mystery known to people through the Holy Spirit. Paul explains that this mystery of Christ is that the Jewish believers and Gentile believers are now the joint **heirs** or co-heirs of the promises that God has made. They will both receive the promises from God. The Jews and the Gentiles are now one body in Christ. The new life in Christ is now available to anyone who believes in Jesus.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word you will use for **heir**. See the Master Glossary for more information about heirs, and translate this word in the same way you have in previous books of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you talk about the "mystery of Christ" in your translation? Pause this audio here.

This mystery was not revealed to other **generations**. Generations are the group of people who were living at the same time. Paul is saying that people who lived before this time did not know about the mystery.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you talk about the other generations of people? Generations is in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for generations that you have used in other books of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

God has revealed this plan through the Spirit. Spirit refers to the **Holy Spirit**, or God's Spirit. God revealed his plan to the Holy Spirit, or by using the Holy Spirit, to his special apostles and prophets. Holy Spirit is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same term for Holy Spirit that you have been using.

God has revealed this plan to the **holy apostles** and **prophets**. The word holy applies to both the apostles and the prophets, because both are set apart for God's work. Apostles, prophet, and holy are all discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for apostle, prophet, and holy that you have been using.

The Holy Spirit revealed that the mystery is that the **gospel**, or **good news**, is also for the Gentiles, not just for **Israel**! And now the Gentiles also inherit eternal life with God forever! Use the same word for Israel and good news or gospel that you used in previous passages, and remember that Israel and good news or gospel are 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.

Ephesians 3:1–6

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (5157949 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 6](#)

Ephesians 3:7-13

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 3:7-13 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 3:7-13 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 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 Ephesians 3:7-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul started the previous passage with a prayer. Then Paul interrupted himself to explain more about how the Gentiles and Jews who believe in Jesus are equal members of God's family. Now Paul continues his explanations by focusing on what God has told Paul to do.

Paul starts this explanation by saying that God has made Paul a servant of the gospel. This means that God has given Paul a job to do. Paul's job is to announce or tell others the good news. Paul sees this job from God as wonderful and special. God's Spirit, which is also God's power, gives Paul God's grace or undeserved love so that Paul can do this special work for God. Paul recognizes that God has been loving and compassionate towards him. Long ago, Paul used to be an enemy of God and God's people, and that's why he calls himself the "least deserving of all of God's special people, or saints." Paul always felt that he, Paul, shouldn't be called an apostle like the others who had worked with Jesus during the years that Jesus was on the earth. Paul says that because God showed grace to Paul, God has allowed Paul to become one of the apostles. God called Paul to do this job even though Paul didn't deserve it.

God gave Paul this special job or responsibility. This special job was to tell the Gentiles about the good things that Jesus gives. These good things can be called endless treasures. A treasure is something very special or things that are really valuable. An endless treasure is like riches or blessings that we can't count or measure because they keep coming and never stop. There is no end to the treasure.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about something so good that you just want to keep talking about it. What kinds of things do you consider to be wonderful treasures from God? Pause this audio here.

Then Paul says, "God chose me to explain to everyone everywhere how God will make his secret plan, or mystery, happen." God is the creator of all things. And God has kept his plan a secret, or hidden in God. God has not revealed this plan to anyone until now when God has revealed the plan to Paul. Now, God wants Paul to explain this special, hidden plan to everyone.

The plan is that the church, or all believers in Jesus, will show others how God plans to bring people together. God has many types of wisdom. God has a purpose in mind. God uses the church to reveal or show all His wisdom to the spiritual powers and rulers or the rulers in heavenly places. These are the spirit beings who have authority or rule in the places where we can't see them. This means that both the angels and the evil spirits will see God's wisdom through the way God works in the church. God has planned to reveal His wisdom like this since before God created the universe. This has always been God's plan. And God has done this through Jesus Christ our Lord, or master. Because of what Jesus Christ our master did through dying on the cross and being raised again, God has done what God always planned to do.

Then Paul has some wonderful news. Paul reminds us that we believe in Jesus Christ and we are united with Jesus because of this belief or faith. Then Paul says that because Christ gives us courage and confidence, we can come into the presence of God without being afraid.

Finally, Paul talks about his personal situation. Paul refers back to the beginning of this section where Paul begins to pray and then cuts off his prayer to remind the Ephesians that he is in prison. Paul tells the Ephesians that they should not be discouraged when they hear about Paul's sufferings in prison. Paul has these trials or sufferings because Paul has been preaching the gospel, or good news, to the Gentiles. Paul specifically tells the Ephesians not to feel discouraged. Paul wants the Ephesians to feel honored by Paul's sufferings. Paul wants the Ephesian believers to be proud of Paul's sufferings for their sake, or to feel honor because Paul is suffering for them.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 3:7-13 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 3 parts.

In the first part: Paul tells the Ephesians that God has given Paul the gift of his grace, or undeserved love. This grace makes Paul able to serve God and preach the wonderful news about Jesus to the Gentiles.

In the second part: Paul tells the Ephesians that God wants His church to show God's wisdom and truth about Jesus to all the spiritual world. This truth is that we can freely get close to God.

In the third part: Paul who is in prison tells the Ephesians to feel honored that Paul is suffering for their sake.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God
- Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit
- Gentile believers
- Jewish believers
- Unseen spirits and rulers or angels

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first part of this passage, Paul explains to the Ephesians how God has chosen Paul and has given Paul a gift so that Paul can serve God by spreading the news to others. This gift is probably God's grace.

Paul uses language that shows that Paul loves the task of sharing the good news. However, Paul considers himself to be unworthy of the task. Even so, God chose Paul to explain God's mysterious plan that God had kept secret until now. This mysterious plan is full of endless treasures, or good things from God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you talk about endless treasures from God? Pause this audio here.

God has had this plan since he created the world, but God has not revealed the plan before until He told Paul about it.

In the second part of this passage, Paul goes on to say that God intends to use the church, or the community of believers, to show God's wisdom. God's wisdom is wonderful, deep, and rich. We cannot understand it. God is wise in everything he does.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you talk about God's deep wisdom? How will you say that God is wise in everything he does? Pause this audio here.

Everyone, including the unseen spirits and rulers in heavenly places, or supernatural spirit beings, will be able to see God's wisdom. Jesus Christ, our Lord, is the person who made God's eternal plan possible. God had this plan from the beginning of the world. Because of what Jesus did and because we trust and follow Jesus, all of us who believe can get close to God.

In the third part of this passage, Paul tells the Ephesians that they should not lose heart, or be discouraged when they think of Paul in prison and in chains. In Paul's time, people talked about their emotions being in their "heart." When people say that they lose heart, they are saying that they become discouraged. Paul says he is suffering because of his work with the Gentiles. Then Paul tells them to feel honored or encouraged when they hear about Paul's sufferings.

Stop here and tell a story about a time when you or a group felt discouraged about something. Listen to the storyteller. Pay attention to the words they use to describe being discouraged. How will you talk about Paul encouraging the believers and telling them to not be discouraged? Pause the recording here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. Assign someone to be each of the characters.

Show God giving Paul his gift of grace and his power. The Holy Spirit comes and gives Paul power. God tells Paul to be the person to spread the good news to the Gentiles. Paul feels that this assignment is a privilege, so the person playing Paul should show joy or gladness about the assignment that God has given to Paul. Then, Paul starts spreading the good news by going from one group of Gentiles to the next. As the Gentiles hear this, they are happy to learn this new thing!

Now have the groups of Gentiles form churches together with the Jewish believers. Jesus comes to these churches and shows them what to do. As they do these things together, show the unseen spirits and rulers watching and seeing God's wisdom in what the believers are doing. Jesus can show that he is bringing believers in Jesus to where God is. Show the believers moving towards God boldly and without any fear.

In the second part of this passage, Paul could show his chains or something that shows he has no freedom. He is in prison. Paul tells the believers not to be discouraged because of Paul's sufferings. Show the believers feeling honored that Paul is suffering for their sake.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 3:7-13 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
- God
- Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit
- Gentile believers
- Jewish believers
- Unseen spirits and rulers or 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.

In part one, Paul tells the Ephesians how God gave Paul the special assignment of spreading the good news about Jesus to others. Paul says that this assignment is a special privilege. Then Paul says that he is the least deserving, or the last person of all the believers that God could have chosen for this job.

Pause the drama.

Ask Paul, "Why do you feel that you don't deserve to be the person God chose for this task?" You may hear, "I did so many things to hurt the believers. I was trying to arrest them and put them in jail. I refused to believe that Jesus could be the promised savior. It wasn't until Jesus actually appeared to me that I believed. I actually saw and heard the risen savior. These people believe just by hearing us believers tell them about Jesus. Their faith is so much stronger than mine. I feel humble when I think that God chose me for this special task."

Paul goes on to explain what the task was that God has given Paul. Paul's task is to tell the Gentiles about all the special treasures or riches they have in Jesus.

In part two, Paul also needed to explain the mysterious plan that God has had since creation but has kept secret. God's plan is to use the church, or the community of believers, to show God's wisdom to everyone including the spirit rulers, or the beings we can't see who rule the heavenly places.

Pause the drama.

Ask God, "How do you feel about Paul?" You may hear, "Paul is my faithful servant. Paul does exactly as I have asked him to do. I asked Paul to carry this message to the Gentiles and I told Paul he would suffer when he did it. But Paul was willing to do it anyway. Even though Paul is suffering now while he is in prison, Paul is still doing my work. I am pleased with Paul."

Ask the Gentiles, "How do you feel when you hear that God's plan works through you and your fellow believers?" You may hear, "I am honored. God chose to reveal his plan through us. God wants people to see God's wisdom when they see the church. I hope that when people see us meeting together to worship God and study God's word, they will see God's wisdom showing in us. This is truly amazing!"

Ask Jesus, "How do you feel about this plan now?" You may hear, "I knew about the plan and I agreed to do my part of the plan. I knew it involved suffering physically. I'm glad that it was accomplished and as a result, people have come into a full relationship with God. Right now, I'm really happy that so many people are believing and following my teachings."

Paul continues to explain to the Ephesians that now, because of what Jesus did, they can come confidently into God's presence.

Pause the drama.

Ask the believers, "How do you feel when you hear that you can go confidently into God's presence?" You may hear, "This is such wonderful news. I had no relationship with God. I didn't even know that there was a God. And now, because I follow Jesus, I can approach God and tell God anything. I can worship God. I have confidence that I will be with God forever. This is so amazing. I want all my friends and family to know this good news."

In part three, Paul reminds the Ephesians that Paul is in prison and suffering for their sake. He is in prison because he took the good news to the Gentiles. But Paul doesn't want them to feel discouraged or to worry about this. In fact, Paul wants the opposite. Paul wants them to feel honored when they hear that Paul is suffering for their sake.

Pause the drama.

Ask the Gentile believers, "How do you feel when you hear about Paul's sufferings for your sake?" You may hear, "I am so sorry that he is suffering. I pray for him all the time. But I do feel honored that Paul loves me so much that he is willing to suffer like this for me. It makes me think about how I might be asked to suffer so that someone else might hear the good news. I'm not discouraged. I'm glad that Paul reminded us not to be discouraged. Rather we should be encouraged to take the good news to others."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 3:7-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Paul says that God has given him God's **grace** and **power**. When people receive grace, they receive something good that they didn't earn and don't deserve. Use the same word for grace that you have been using. Grace is discussed in the Master Glossary. Power is a special strength that the Holy Spirit gives to people who believe in Jesus. When talking about God's power, use the same word that you have used in previous translations.

Paul says that God made Paul a **servant** or minister of the **gospel**. The word for servant is not the same word as slave. Paul serves others, or in this case Paul serves the gospel by telling others about Jesus. The gospel is

the good news about Jesus and what Jesus has done for all of us. Use the same word for gospel that you have been using.

Stop here and discuss what word you will use for **servant**. This is the kind of servant that serves others, often in the church. This is not a slave. Servant is discussed in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that he is the least of God's people or the **saints**. At the time that Paul wrote this letter, a saint was anyone who believed in Jesus. All believers were saints. Saint is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for saints that you have been using.

Paul was to explain the mysterious plan or the **mystery** of God's plan to the Gentiles. A mystery is something that we don't know or understand or can't easily understand. Use the same word you used in the previous passage for mystery.

God kept His plan **secret**, or hidden, from the beginning, or the time when God created everything. Something that is secret means that no one can speak about it and people cannot know about it. God kept it secret, or didn't tell anyone about it, until God revealed the plan to Paul and told Paul to tell the Gentiles about this plan. Paul talks about this plan as an eternal plan. That means that the plan had no beginning and has no end. The plan has always been with God.

God's purpose is to use the **church** to show God's **wisdom**. The church is made up of those who believe in Jesus and gather to worship together. The church is a group of people, not a building. Church and wisdom are discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same words for church and wisdom that you have been using.

The unseen rulers and authorities in the **heavenly** places, or heavenly realms, will see God's wisdom. Paul is talking about the spirit world, or where those spirits live that no one can see. These spirits can include both angels or good spirits who do the things God assigns them to do and evil spirits or those who work against God.

Stop here and discuss the best way to talk about these spirits so that people understand that these may refer to both good and evil spirits. Remember to talk about heavenly places or heavenly realms in the same way you have in previous passages. Heaven is in the Master Glossary. Pause the audio here.

God has carried out his eternal plan through Jesus **Christ** our **Lord**, or **master**. Jesus Christ is the term for Jesus. Christ and Lord are discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same words for Christ and Lord you have been using.

Because of our **faith** in Jesus, we can come into God's presence. In this context, faith describes people who trust in what Jesus did for us. Use the same word for faith that you have been using. Faith is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Paul tells the Ephesians not to lose heart or not to feel **discouraged**. Use the expression you decided to use for being discouraged or feeling tired or losing heart.

Paul says that his sufferings are the Ephesian believers' **glory**. This means that Paul's sufferings are like an honor for the Ephesians. The Ephesians should feel honor or be proud because of Paul's sufferings. Paul is saying that this has happened for their benefit or to help them, and they should be proud of it. Use the same word for glory that you have used before, and remember that glory is discussed 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.

Ephesians 3:7-13

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (5530497 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Ephesians 3:14-21

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 3:14-21 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 3:14-21 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 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 Ephesians 3:14–21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In a previous passage, Paul began a prayer and then interrupted himself to give further explanation about God's plan. This plan was for the Gentiles and the Jews to share equally in the wonderful promises that God's children will inherit. Then Paul explained how God had chosen Paul to give this message to the Gentiles. Now Paul returns to his prayer.

Paul starts his prayer by making a statement that refers to all the good news that Paul has just told. The good news is for both the Jewish people and for the Gentiles: that when people believe in Jesus they are able to come close to God. God has joined or united the Gentiles and the Jews into one group, the church. Now Paul now wants to offer a prayer for this group. Paul starts by saying that Paul is kneeling down to pray. Most Jews prayed while standing, but sometimes Jews knelt on the ground to show that they were really submitting to God and worshipping him. Paul chose to get on his knees to pray probably because he wanted to show how much he cared for the Ephesians when he prayed for them.

Stop here and discuss the following question: What is the normal prayer position for your people when they pray in public? Do they use the same position when they pray in private? What does kneeling in prayer symbolize to your people? Pause the audio here.

Paul says he is praying to the Father. Paul is talking about God, who is Paul's heavenly father. Paul identifies the Father as being the creator of everything in heaven and on earth. Some translations say that God, the Father, gives every family, or group of people on earth its name. Another translation says that God gives all people their life. In other words, everything and every person comes from God. Paul is praying to his heavenly father who is the father of all life and who gives fatherhood to each family. Paul may have been thinking about Roman fathers who kept their authority over their children as long as they lived. Paul means that God, who lives forever, is our father forever. Some Jews believed that the angels were the families above in heaven and the people were the families on earth. After saying all this as his introduction to the prayer, Paul now asks God for some specific things.

Paul asks God who has great blessings in heaven to give the Ephesians power and strength. Paul is trying to explain that God has great glory, or majesty and power. It is like God is rich with glory like a person is rich with money. God is so rich in power that he uses his power to give us spiritual strength. God brings us his power in the Holy Spirit when he gives the Holy Spirit to his believers. This strength makes the believers strongly trust in God. It's not a strength you can see, but a strength that is inside a person. The person who has this strength is strong in his heart or in his mind.

Pause here and discuss the following question: Tell a story about someone with inner strength who remains strong in his faith. Who gives this person their strength? What does he or she do? Does the storyteller use a specific body part to describe where this inner strength lies? For example: strong in your heart or strong in your mind. Pause the audio here.

Paul is talking about Christ living permanently in the hearts of the believers. Because they have believed in Jesus Christ or trusted in Jesus, Paul is asking that the believers will always trust in Christ, which is like Christ always living with them and in them.

Then Paul uses two different comparisons to describe God's love. Paul wants the believers to understand Christ's love, but it's really difficult! So Paul gives us some ways to think about understanding it. First Paul prays that believers will be "rooted and established" in love. Paul uses the idea of strong tree roots that can stand

strong even in a storm. Then Paul talks about establishing a house foundation. A house in Paul's time usually had a strong foundation of stone that kept it steady in wind or storms. Paul says that like strong tree roots and a strong house foundation, God's people need to have a strong love for God and for people, so that they will be able to continue following God.

Stop here and show a picture of a tree with deep roots. Pause the audio here.

Stop here and show a picture of the stone foundation of a house. Pause the audio here.

As people grow in their love for God and for people, they will have power to understand even more just how much God loves them. Paul asks God to give the followers of Jesus the power or the ability to understand Christ's love. Paul talks about the saints or any person who believes in Jesus Christ. This means not just the Ephesian believers but anyone who ever believes in Jesus. One way to say this is, "You, together with all God's people." Paul wants the believers to know that Christ's love has no limit. Paul uses a word picture of a building or a structure that is high, wide, and deep to say that Christ's love has no limits. Paul says that this love is too great for us to understand completely. But we still need to experience this love and when we do, we will be complete or whole with all the good things like life and power that come from the very nature of God.

Stop here and as a group describe someone you know who seems to live a complete or full life in God. What kinds of things do they do? How do they show God's love and character in the things that they do? Pause this audio here.

Paul finishes his prayer by praising God. This part of the prayer is like a song or praise to God. Paul asks that all glory be given to God. God is able to do greater things within the believers than we can possibly imagine. God uses His mighty power to do this. We need to give God the glory or praise for what He does both in the believers, his church, and in Christ Jesus. Paul says that this is to continue through all generations, or all people to come in the future.

Stop here and discuss how you might end a prayer of joy and thanksgiving in your culture. Pause the audio here.

Paul has followed the Jewish custom of ending a prayer with a blessing to God. Part of this custom was to respond to prayers and benedictions by saying "Amen." Amen means "let it be" or "I agree with what has been said." Today, we often say "amen" to let people know that we have finished praying. Most likely, Paul used the word here to show that he wants everything to happen as he has prayed it would.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 3:14–21 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 states his prayer for the believers at Ephesus. Paul particularly prays that God will give the believers inner strength and that the believers will understand the nature of God's love for them.

In the second part: Paul ends his prayer by offering praise to God. Paul talks particularly about the glory of God.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God the Father
- Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit
- The saints or the believers in the church
- Other believers through the generations to come

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first part of this passage, Paul reminds the Ephesians of why he is praying. Paul is praying because of everything he has just shared with them. Paul wants God to give the Ephesian believers strength because now they are all one group, one church made up of both Gentiles and Jews. Paul kneels on the ground with both knees on the floor. We don't know if Paul would have had a rug, mat, or pillow under his knees. Some translations use the expression, "fall on my knees." This does not mean that Paul stumbled or accidentally fell. It means that Paul chose to get on his knees to pray. Paul does not say why he chose to kneel to pray, but we know that Paul is showing respect and worship to God. Paul prays to God the Father, the creator of everything, or God the Father who gives every family its name.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate that God is the Father who gives everything its name, or who gives life to everything in heaven and on earth. Pause the audio here.

God the Father has unlimited power and strength, like a wealthy man has unlimited riches. Paul asks that God would use the Holy Spirit and God's unlimited resources to give the believers inner strength, or strength and power. When Paul uses two words like strength and power that mean almost the same thing, Paul is showing that this is really important. Paul continues his prayer, asking that Christ would live in the hearts of the believers through faith. With this power and strength, Christ will always live in believers' hearts. In other words, Christ will take possession of the believers because they trust in Christ. The heart doesn't mean our physical heart in our body. The heart means the inner self, or mind, our purposes and desires. Some languages use the liver, stomach, or bowels to show a person's inner self.

Stop here and discuss which part of the body your culture uses to describe emotions. Pause the audio here.

Paul uses the example of the deep roots of a tree and the deep stone foundation of a house to show how God's love will keep them strong in their faith. Paul wants the believers to be deeply rooted in God's love.

Stop here and look again at a picture of a tree with deep roots. Look again at a picture of the deep stone foundation of a house. Now discuss as a group how to compare God's love to these two examples. Pause the audio here.

Paul asks God to give the believers the power to understand the height, depth, and width of God's love. Some translations might express this as Paul is asking that they will have a total understanding of how much Christ loves them. Paul says that this love is so great that the believers won't be able to understand it completely. But with this love of Christ, the believers will be complete or whole because they have the fullness of life and power that God gives.

Stop here and discuss how you will talk about the height, depth and width of Christ's love. Paul uses the image of a very large building to describe Christ's love. What example would you use to help people understand how big Christ's love is? It might be fun to play a game in which people try to identify the highest, widest, or deepest thing or place they can find. Then talk about how to get over, around, or under those objects. How does this activity help you think about how you can describe Christ's love? Pause the audio here.

In the second part of this passage, Paul finishes the prayer by praising God. The end of this prayer is like a praise song. Paul wants the people to give all glory to God. God uses His power to accomplish much more in us than we might think to ask for or that we might be able to measure. God shows his power in his church, the group of believers, and in Christ Jesus, his son who has saved us. Paul asks that all generations would give glory to God

for this. Paul finishes by saying, "Amen." Paul was using the word "amen" to say, "I agree with what has been said."

Stop here and discuss the song. How do you use songs like this? How can you show people that this end to the prayer is a special song? Pause the audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. Assign people to play each role. As Paul begins the prayer, Paul chooses to get on his knees. Paul looks at God and begins the prayer by calling God, "Father." Paul asks God, the Father, the Creator of everything, to use His Spirit to give the believers inner strength. As Paul asks this, have the Holy Spirit move from God to the believers and touch each believer. As each believer is touched, show that he feels this inner strength.

Paul prays that Christ will live in the hearts of the believers. As Paul prays this, have Jesus move from beside God to go to each believer. Each believer shows that he believes that Jesus is living with him now.

As Paul talks about being rooted and grounded in Christ's love, show tree roots and the foundation of a house. Paul talks about the length, height, and width of Christ's love. As Paul talks about this, show something that has great height, width, and depth. Show Christ loving his people, and show his people, the believers, receiving Christ's love. Show the believers living in a way that is complete or full. God is happy that they are receiving this love and God continues to give them his blessings.

Then Paul and the believers, the church, all turn to God and give God glory for all the things that God has done that they didn't even think to ask for. Paul asks that this glory would continue always.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 3:14–21 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
- God who inspires Paul
- Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit
- The saints, or the believers in the church
- Other believers through the generations to come

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 part one, Paul tells the believers that when Paul thinks of how the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers are united as one body or one church, Paul gets on his knees to pray to God the Father.

Pause the drama.

Ask Paul, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I love these Gentile believers. I am so glad that God sees them as God's full children, equal to the Jewish believers. I'm so glad that God has brought them together to form one body and they are equal in God's eyes. The church will be so strong because of this. I am humbled when I think of my part in this when all I did was share the good news with them all. I just want to praise God for this."

Paul asks God to use God's unlimited resources to give inner strength to all the believers. Paul asks that God use His Holy Spirit to give this power to the believers. Paul also asks that Jesus Christ would live in the heart of each believer as that believer trusts or believes in Jesus.

Pause the drama.

Ask the believers, "How do you feel when you hear Paul praying this prayer?" You may hear, "It makes me feel glad. Paul wants the best for us. Paul wants us to be strong in our faith. It seems that the way to do this is to ask God to give us the strength we need. Paul shows how much he loves us when he prays like this. I think it means that God loves us too and wants us to have this inner strength. When I know that Jesus lives in me, I feel so humble. It makes me want to remember that wherever I go or whatever I do, I have Jesus with me because Jesus lives inside me. This is an incredible gift. I hope I can be worthy of this gift."

Paul uses the picture of deep tree roots and the picture of a strong foundation of a house to remind the believers of how important it is that they have God's love. With God's love, they will be strong. Paul wants the believers to begin to understand how high and how wide and how deep God's love is. Even with this picture, Paul tells the believers that it will be hard for them to fully understand God's love. Paul wants the believers to experience the love of Christ. Paul asks that the believers have the life and power that comes from God. This is a full life and full power.

Pause the drama.

Ask the believers, "How do you feel when you hear Paul talking about God's love like this?" You may hear, "I thought I was understanding God's love for me, but now I'm seeing that God's love is so much bigger than I ever thought. It seems like I will keep learning about God's love for me the rest of my life. I love thinking about how the tree roots make the tree strong when there is a lot of wind. I've seen a tree with poor roots fall over in the wind. I want my own experience with God's love to be like the tree with deep roots. I am looking forward to having this fullness of life and power that Paul has been talking about. I hope that others who don't yet believe in Jesus will see this power and fullness of life in me and it will make them want to follow Jesus."

Paul concludes his prayer by praising God. Paul gives glory to God because God can do even more than we can think to ask for. God uses His mighty power to work within the believers. Paul also praises both God and Jesus because of what they have done in the church or group of believers. Paul wants all generations to come to praise God. Paul finishes by saying, "Amen."

Pause the drama.

Ask Paul, "How do you feel when you think about God using His mighty power to work within the believers?" You may hear, "I get excited about what might happen if the believers experience God's love like they should. If the believers know that God is working in them through God's mighty power, then there is nothing the believers can't do for Christ. They will be able to tell others about Jesus. People will see God at work in their lives and be amazed by what they see. The church will grow and grow. I want this so very much and I feel really excited thinking about it."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 3:14-21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Paul says, "I pray to the **Father**, the **Creator** of everything" or the father of all the fathers on earth. Father refers to heavenly father or to God. Paul uses the same word for father that you use for your own fathers. Be sure that your listeners understand that Paul is talking about God, the Father, and use the same word for Father that you have used in previous passages. Creator means the person who creates or makes something from nothing. God created the universe and everything in it.

Paul says that God created the families, or groups of people, in **heaven** and on earth. Use the same word for heaven that you have used in previous passages, and remember that heaven is in the Master Glossary.

Paul talks about the riches of God's **glory**. Glory is about how beautiful, powerful, and majestic God is. Glory is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for glory that you have used when translating previous passages.

God will use His **Spirit**, or the **Holy Spirit**, to give us inner strength. The Holy Spirit is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same phrase for the Holy Spirit that you have been using.

Christ will live **in your hearts**. Christ is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for Christ you have been using. "In your heart" refers to the center of your thoughts and emotions.

Stop here and discuss the wording you have chosen to describe what **in your heart** means. Pause the audio here.

Paul asks that Christ would live in the hearts of the believers through **faith**, or because they trust in Jesus. Faith is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for faith you have been using.

Paul wants all the **saints**, or all of God's people, to understand God's love. Saint is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for saint that you have been using.

Paul finishes his prayer by asking for glory to God in the **church**. The church is the group of believers who meet together to worship and pray. Church is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for church that you have been using.

Paul asks for this glory to God to be in all **generations** to come. Another way to say this is "through the ages to come." Paul wants all the people from now into the future to experience this love and power from God. Generations is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for generations you have been using.

Paul ends the prayer by saying **amen**. Amen is the usual response given at the end of a prayer. It has the meaning of agreeing with what the person has said and saying that this is true.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What word or phrase will you use for **amen**? Use the same word that you have used in other books of the Bible. Amen 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.

Ephesians 3:14–21

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (10477270 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Ephesians 4:1–6

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 4:1–6 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:1–6 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 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 Ephesians 4:1–6 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the first half of the letter, Paul has been reminding the believers in Jesus who live in Ephesus about the purpose God has for them. These believers, both Jews and Gentiles, are all one body, or group of people who work together. They all have the same inheritance from God. Paul now tells the believers how to live in response. Paul says that the believers must be united, living in a way that is pleasing to God, then he gives the foundation that makes their unity possible.

Paul begins by mentioning again that he is a prisoner for serving the Lord Jesus. Paul calls himself a prisoner in the Lord to show that this is where the Lord has put him, and to show that the Lord Jesus is truly his master. Now Paul will give the believers instructions on how to live, wherever the Lord has placed them.

Paul urges the believers to live a life worthy of their calling. This calling is God's invitation to people to be God's people and to do his will. The believers should act in a way that is right for God's people.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about any important groups you are a part of, such as a community of people, or a sports team. Tell a story about a time when you went to an event where everyone knew you were a part of that group. How did you show that you were a part of the group? How did you act differently to those who were not part of the group? Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the believers to always be humble. At this time, Greek and Roman people often thought that if a person was humble, they acted like a servant. This was not a job they valued. By being humble, the believers would act differently from those around them, which would show that they were part of the group of believers.

Paul says that believers should also treat others gently and be willing to wait for God to do His work in His time. Paul also says that believers should "bear with each other," or love each other even when it is difficult. Paul says that doing these things will help the believers keep the unity of the Spirit, or have good relationships with each other and work together well. Paul says that the Holy Spirit gives peace which unites or connects believers. To be united means to work together for a common purpose. The believers must do everything they can to make sure that they keep this unity, by being humble, patient, and gentle. If they do this, they will not break up the group's peace with arguments, hurt feelings, misunderstandings, and other problems.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who fought with others and acted more important than they actually were. How did this cause problems or bad feelings? Now tell a story about someone, such as a mother or a teacher, who worked hard to make things better for those around them, but didn't boast about it. How did they show they valued and cared for the people around them? Pause this audio here.

Now, Paul gives a formal statement of belief. The body, or group of believers that form the Church, needs to use these beliefs as the basis for everything they do. When the Church firmly believes these things, God will help them to be united and to have one purpose. Paul talks about the "oneness" of several things; there is no division. Paul says that there is one Holy Spirit who brings a group of believers together with one purpose. Paul says that there is one Lord Jesus, our master. We all have faith or believe that Jesus died and rose again to save us. We show loyalty to Jesus by our baptism. There is one God who is the father of "all." Perhaps this means that God is the father of all people and all things, so he is the creator and master of all things, and He works in all situations. Or perhaps this means that God is the father of all believers in Jesus. God is our master and king, and he works through us, his children. God is "in all," which means that God is present everywhere, all the time, and God lives in his children who believe in him.

In any case, God is the highest ruler and greater than all people and believers. If the believers agree with this and the other beliefs Paul has listed, they will all equally do God's will, which will keep them working together in unity.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when you were working on a project where people agreed on the goal and how to get there. What do you think enabled the people to work together in unity? What beliefs did they all have that helped them to work together?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:1–6 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: Because of everything the believers learned in the first part of the letter, Paul urges them to live in a way that will continue to bring them together as a unified body, or group, of believers.

In the second part: Paul gives the foundation for our unity—the unity we find when we trust in Jesus.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God
- The believers who would listen to someone read this letter aloud
- Holy Spirit
- Lord Jesus

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Since Paul knew someone would read these words aloud, Paul used a Greek style for speeches or teachings. Paul is trying to persuade his audience to do something in this passage. He begins by explaining important truths, then gives instructions based on those truths. In the previous sections of this letter, Paul described what God has done for believers. These are things that the believers would either already know or that would make sense because of what they already know. The believers can trust that Paul's instructions are good, because he has shown that he believes the same truth that they do.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, make a small speech to convince your listeners why they should agree with you about something, such as what the best kind of food is. After the speaker finishes, have the group point out the things that the speaker did to convince them. Suggest other methods that people often use. Discuss whether your culture has a certain kind of style for speeches or teachings. Pause this audio here.

In the first part of this passage, Paul shifts his focus from his description of what God has done to talk about what the believers should do in response.

Paul reminds the believers that he has just explained to them that God has given his people a special calling. Then, Paul reminds them that he's a prisoner, both literally, and because he is a servant of God's will. Because of that, Paul has the right to strongly suggest that the believers do the things he's about to tell them to do. Paul strongly encourages them to live in a certain way because of all that God has done for them. If the believers live like that, they will be worthy of God's calling and purpose in their lives.

Stop here and discuss as a group: In your culture, how do people try to persuade others to act in a certain way? How does the speaker show they have authority on the topic they are discussing? What things do they say to convince people of the importance of taking a certain action? Pause this audio here.

Paul now describes the worthy way of living and gives instructions directly to the believers. The Holy Spirit united the believers in Jesus in the bond of peace. This bond is like a rope that ties people together. The believers can stay united like this when they are completely, or always humble, gentle, and patient. They should tolerate

each other even when they do wrong things because they love each other. The believers should be eager to do everything possible to keep themselves united. By doing these things, the believers will remain united in the way that the Holy Spirit united them.

In the second part of this passage, Paul lists the things that believers believe in to explain why the believers should be united. Their belief in the same things keeps them united. Paul gives these main beliefs in a more formal statement of belief. A more formal statement is easier for believers to repeat and remember. Paul starts by describing "one body, or group of believers," and "one spirit," because he has just been talking about the group of believers.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think back to the first activity which was about how to convince someone of something. How did the speaker arrange his reasons? In what order did he list them? What other way could he have listed them? Pause this audio here.

Paul's list has three sections. The first section includes the Holy Spirit who makes believers into one body through unity. The second section is about the Lord Jesus, the basis of the faith, and baptism. This shows that we are devoted to the Lord Jesus and what he did for us to give us salvation. And the third section is about God who is over all. In the first section, Paul says that there is one Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who as he already said is the one who unites the body, or the Church. Just like there is one Spirit, God called all the people in the church to one hope. This hope is that God will give good things to His people, which is the calling Paul mentioned at the beginning. Believers believe this hope because of the actions of Jesus, whom Paul lists next as the one Lord. There is one faith, which means that the believers trust that Jesus is Lord. There is one baptism: the public confession symbolizing the new life God has given to all believers. Finally, Paul says there is one God who is the Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all. "All" refers to all people, either all God's people or all people everywhere.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How would it be natural in your language to translate Paul's list? Pause this audio here.

Paul explains that believers do not believe in different ideas that would cause conflict or divide people. People's actions are based on what they believe. Since believers all believe the same things, they should keep the unity that the Holy Spirit started when the Holy Spirit brought them together as one group of believers.

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, the Holy Spirit, Jesus, and God the Father.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, remember that Paul talks about himself as a prisoner for the Lord. Then Paul turns to the group of believers who are listening to the letter and encourages them to live a life worthy of their calling. He explains what that looks like. Then Paul begins to teach about the main points about trusting in Jesus. First Paul talks about the believers and the Holy Spirit when he says there is one body, and the Holy Spirit that brings unity in peace for the believers. The Holy Spirit can surround the believers to show how the believers are unified and working together. Then Paul begins to talk about the believers' one, united hope, and he points to Jesus as the believers act out baptizing each other and following Jesus. Paul then explains how God's presence is everywhere, as God moves around the group of believers.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:1–6 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
- God
- The believers who would listen to someone read this letter aloud
- Holy Spirit
- 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 says, "I have told you what God has done and his purpose for you. I'm a prisoner because I serve the Lord Jesus, so I can say these things to you. Because of what God has done, I want to urge you to live a life that is right for your role as children of God, which God called you to be."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing God, "What were you feeling or thinking about these words that you guided Paul to share?" The person might answer things like, "I want these people to know that I called them because I love them," or "These people should listen to the words I am giving them through Paul's writing, since these actions will bring peace," or "I want them to understand that I've done so much for them. They can live a life that shows others what it means to live in peace with me and with others. I really want to use them to show this to the world!"

Next Paul says, "You must always be humble, gentle, patient, showing how much you love one another by being loving and understanding of people's differences. The Spirit of God gives you peace that binds you together and you must do your best to keep this unity."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking when you hear this?" The person might answer things like, "I really want to follow God and try to do these things!" or "I am glad we have help from God to do these things, since it will be hard to always follow these instructions!" or "I see how these actions will build good relationships with those around me," or "I am thankful that Paul is helping us by sharing these words with us."

Paul says, "There is one body, which is all of the believers, and one Holy Spirit, just as there is one thing we hope for, which God has called you to. There is one Lord, Jesus, and there is one faith, and one baptism. There is one God who is the Father of all, who reigns over all, works through all, and is in all."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "It is very important that they believe the truth, so I will list these things clearly," or "I want the believers to have peace, so I will instruct them carefully," or "I hope they listen to these words, since they are the words that God has given me and these words will help the believers!"

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking when you hear this?" The person might answer things like, "I am in awe that I am part of a body of believers that is so unified," or "Even though other

churches in other cities are so different, I realize that God wants us all to work together and have peace in who God is and what he has done for us."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:1–6 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Paul calls himself a prisoner of the **Lord**. A lord is a master over other people, who has full authority. Paul often called Jesus "Lord," and since Paul later mentions the one Spirit, one God the Father, and the one Lord, Lord here probably means 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 tells the believers to live or act in a way **worthy** of their calling. A **calling** is God's invitation to people to be his people and to do his will. When someone lives in a worthy way, it means that they live in a right or appropriate manner for what God has called them to do. The person is a good representative for God.

Stop here and discuss as a group the idea of living in a **worthy** way. How will you translate this in your passage? Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the believers to be **humble, gentle, and patient**. To be humble means to not be prideful but to treat other people better than oneself. To be gentle means to not be harsh and or resentful, but to treat others kindly. To be patient means to be willing to wait, and to keep going in difficult circumstances.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **humble, gentle, and patient**. 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.

Believers must keep the **unity** of the Spirit through the bond, or connection of peace. To be united means to work together for a common purpose. United people agree on the purpose and work together to help each other reach the goal together. Use the same word or phrase for unity as you used in previous passages.

The **Spirit** is the **Holy Spirit**, the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is not just a power but is also a person himself. The Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity—the God who is one, but who consists of three persons. God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit are three different persons, but together they are one God. The Holy Spirit makes it possible for people to become followers of Jesus and unites the followers. For more information on Spirit, refer to Holy Spirit in the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Spirit, or Holy Spirit as you used in previous passages.

Peace means both an absence of conflict and a fullness, or completeness, of life. Peace does not just mean no war or conflict. Peace means people live together in unity and love for one another. 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 says there is one **body**, which is another word for the group of people who believe in Jesus. Paul calls the believers the "body of Christ," since like a physical body, there are many members with different roles, but they are all connected, and do Christ's work on earth. Use the same word or phrase for body as you used in previous passages.

There is also one **hope** for believers. A hope is something people eagerly look forward to. For believers, this hope is that they will get to see God's goodness in the future and that they will have eternal life with God. This is a sure hope, because they have seen that God is worthy of trust through his saving acts in the past. For more information on hope, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for hope as you used in previous passages.

There is one **faith**. Faith is to rely on someone: to trust and believe that what that person says is true. The specific faith that Paul is talking about is when someone believes in Jesus. That person believes that Jesus is the son of God and trusts that he has died to save them and that God has forgiven and accepted them. As a result,

the person is committed to doing everything that Jesus has commanded. For more information on faith, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for faith as you used in previous passages.

There is one **baptism**. To baptize someone means to ceremonially wash them in water to show that they are fully committed to the community or person leading it. This baptism was a sign of a person's need for forgiveness, as well as a sign that they now belonged to Jesus and wanted to follow him. When someone undertakes baptism, it is as if they die and become alive again. It is a symbol showing that their old life is dead and they now have a new life because they belong to Jesus. In this section, when Paul says there is one baptism, he is saying that we are all, together as believers, loyal to Jesus and live a new life with Jesus. We've shown that through baptism.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **baptism**. 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 word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

There is one God and **Father** of all. Paul uses the same word that you use for your fathers. Use the same word for Father here that you have 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.

Ephesians 4:1–6

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (12815659 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Ephesians 4:7-16

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 4:7-16 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:7-16 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 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 Ephesians 4:7-16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the last part of the letter, Paul urged unity and explained the beliefs that unite believers. Paul has been talking about the "one faith" that unites believers. Now he seems to change to talking about the different gifts from Christ that make this one group of believers strong. In fact, it is the variety of gifts that makes the unity of the church even stronger!

Paul begins by saying that Christ has given all the believers, himself included, different kinds of grace because of Christ's generosity. This grace is not the gift of salvation grace, but gifts for serving, or an ability to do God's work. Paul calls these gifts grace because we do not deserve to receive such wonderful gifts from God. Paul is going to talk about a few kinds of these gifts.

Paul first explains how we know Christ gave these gifts. He quotes a victory song from earlier in the Bible about a king processing to his throne after defeating his enemies. In that time, after a victory, an Israelite king would go up the hill of the capital city, or "ascend on high." The king would take with him the enemies the king had captured, and the valuable items he had taken or received from the enemy. As the king went up the hill, he would often give out gifts to the people watching him pass by. Since a king would both receive and give gifts after a victory, some versions of the original victory song say "he received many gifts," while the one Paul quotes says "he gave many gifts."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, when you are celebrating a big life event, such as a birth or a wedding, discuss what kinds of gifts people give each other. What kind of gifts do the people give to you? What kind of gifts do you give back, such as gifts of food or invitations to a party or gathering? Pause this audio here.

Paul compares this victory song to Christ's victory over sin and the way he gave grace, or the special gifts of abilities, to believers. Paul explains that Christ ascended, or went up to the highest place, where God is. Since Christ had been with God, this means he must have first come down to a lower place. Some believe this lower place may be where the dead are, but it probably means Earth. Just like the king won a victory, Christ won a victory over sin and death on earth and then went up above the sky to be with God again. Christ ascended so that he could be everywhere, and make everything perfect.

Paul says some of the gifts Christ gave to believers in his church are the roles of the leaders of the church. There are apostles, who are representatives of God and who have the authority to give messages and to make decisions about spiritual matters. There are prophets, who give messages from God to the people. Evangelists tell other people the good news about Jesus. Pastors care for the believers' needs, and teachers explain the Scriptures to people. Pastors and teachers have similar functions and sometimes the same person does these two roles.

The job of these leaders of believers is to build up or prepare God's people to do God's work, just like a person would build a house so that it is strong and useful. This work should continue until the believers unite in their faith, or trust in Jesus. By faith, the believers are all united to Christ Jesus and, since they are all united with Christ, they are all united with each other.

This work should also continue until the believers are united in their knowledge of the Son of God, or are alike in the way that they trust Christ and experience his power in their lives. The church should become mature like a full-grown man, as a complete body, growing wise in the same way that an adult becomes wiser as they grow up. They grow, becoming like a mature adult until they are wise like Jesus himself, who is the standard for maturity and wisdom.

Next, Paul explains why the believers need to mature. Cunning, deceitful, crafty false teachers lie and try to convince the believers of actions and beliefs that are not from God. Children are more likely to believe things that aren't true because they are not mature. The believers must not stay immature and unwise like children. Paul compares immature believers to a small boat in stormy waters, carried one way and then another by the wind and waves that keep changing. Tricky lies and false teachers lead immature people in all the wrong directions, just like the wind and waves can carry a boat in the wrong direction. Another comparison to use for immature believers would be to say that they are like leaves that the wind blows around.

Discuss as a group: In your culture, how would you describe someone who easily believes lies or who changes their beliefs often, without knowledge or experience? What would you compare them to? Pause this audio here.

Instead of listening to these lies, the believers should speak what is true about God, and live according to his teaching. We should do all of this while showing love for each other, just like Christ did. The church is like a human body. It is made up of many people with many roles who are connected like a body. Christ is like the head, or the leader of the body. He makes the whole church body fit together perfectly, just like a human body. Members of Christ's church are like the ligaments—the parts of the body that hold it together and make it move.

Just like the ligaments of a body, members help each other, support each other, and work together to make the church function well. And when each part of the body works together, it grows. In the same way, when each member of the church works together in a loving way, the church can grow stronger.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:7-16 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 4 parts.

In the first part: Paul explains that Christ gave different kinds of gifts in order to strengthen the unity of His church.

In the second part: Paul interrupts his explanation about the gifts to confirm from Scripture the idea of Christ giving gifts. He identifies the victorious king in the Scripture passage as Jesus.

In the third part: Paul explains the gifts that Christ gave.

In the fourth part: Paul explains the purposes of the gifts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Jesus Christ
- The leaders of the church: the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers
- The believers who are listening to these words

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first part of this passage, Paul begins with a brief overview of what he will be talking about: that Christ has given gifts to all believers because Christ loves to give gifts. Christ gives different people different gifts, which all work together in unity. Notice that Paul changes from giving instructions, saying, "you should do this," to explaining how "we" should use these gifts, including himself in the explanation.

In the second part of this passage, Paul explains how we know that these gifts came from Christ. At that time, teachers of God's word would often read a section of the Bible, then explain how the words applied or what they meant in the current time. This is what Paul does. Paul quotes a section of a victory song from Psalms, which the believers would know to be true and reliable. The author wrote this song about God, and how God, who lives higher than the highest places, must have to come down before he can go back up. Paul now explains the Scripture song he quoted. Paul says this song is about Christ. Christ is the one who came down to live on earth. He then left by ascending, or going up above and beyond the sky. He did this so that he could fill everything with his presence or with his rule, making everything as it should be. These gifts help the church grow Christ's kingdom.

Paul does not explain everything in the section of the victory song quoted, just the parts that are about the topic Paul is discussing. He explains that this song is about Christ, and the song says that Christ gave gifts, so we can know these gifts came from Christ. Paul does not explain who the captives are, since that is not the focus of his words here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, sing a part of a song, or quote part of a poem, then briefly explain what that part of the song is about. Listen for the way the speaker may point out certain words from the song in their explanation, but not all of them. Pause this audio here.

Now that he has shown that Christ gives these gifts, Paul explains in the third part of this passage what the gifts, or abilities, are and how people should use them. These are not all of the gifts Christ has given to believers, just

the special tasks he has given to people who lead or give guidance to the church. Paul does not explain these roles here, because the believers would probably know what these roles are.

In the fourth part of this passage, Paul explains the purposes of these gifts in the body of Christ, the church. Paul says that Christ gave these abilities to these leaders to prepare the believers for serving Christ and to build up, or make the church stronger, just like a builder builds a house to be strong. A strong church is united in the way that they trust Christ and experience Jesus, the Son of God. They are like a human who grows into an adult and becomes mature. Being a mature adult is like being fully like Christ—being like him in every way.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In this passage Paul uses the idea of "building" something to show how the church becomes stronger. Discuss how in your culture people talk about making a group of people stronger. Think of times when leaders, such as the leaders of a country or a business, talk about improving the group of people they lead, so that the group can last longer and continue in hard times. What comparisons or ideas did they use? Pause this audio here.

Paul describes the dangers which the mature church will avoid. Paul says that by using the gifts to become mature, the Christians will not be like children, who are more likely to believe things that aren't true. They also will not be like boats, or other light objects, which the wind can push off-course. People who lie and trick others with wrong teachings are like the winds, and want to lead people in the wrong way, but they would not be able to trick the believers. Paul mentions these things so that the believers who are listening will understand how important it is to be mature.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do deceitful people do? Tell a story about someone who lied and tried to get people to believe something false. Pay attention to the language you use to describe these dishonest people. Think about your previous discussion about people who are easily deceived, and now about people who lie. Discuss how you might translate this picture of "being tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming." Pause this audio here.

Now, Paul makes a strong contrast. He talks about what believers should do instead in order to become mature. Instead of believing false teachings, they should speak the truth about God in a way that shows love. Doing this will cause the people to become like Christ. Just like a body grows up and becomes strong, the believers will as well. Christ is the head, or leader of the body, and he is the one who gives the church the ability to grow, partially through the gift of the leaders that Paul mentioned earlier. Just like the ligaments of a body, members of the church help each other, support each other, and work together to make the church function well.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, have someone briefly discuss a useful activity they do regularly, such exercising, planting crops, or cooking, and why it is important. They can describe how it helps them, why they do it, or who taught them to do it. After they finish talking about it, discuss as a group how the speaker showed the importance of the activity. In this passage we see Paul comparing the church to the human body as it grows into an adult. We see Paul comparing the members of the church to the parts of the body that hold it together. When you were talking about how important something was, what kinds of comparisons did you use? 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, his audience, Jesus, the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, remember that Paul emphasizes that he is talking now about each person in the audience. He shows that Jesus is giving them gifts, and Jesus calls out a person from the audience to play each leadership role in the church. As you continue to tell the story, show the leaders building something together and the group trusting in Jesus and following him all together. When the false teachers come, show them causing the believers to toss in the wind like they are on a boat or in a storm. As you talk about speaking the truth in love, show how the believers change as they speak to each other in a loving way. Notice how the human body works together and how fingers and knees and toes help make the body to move and accomplish tasks. Then show how the believers are working happily together in some way to accomplish a task.

*Embodying the Text**Embodying the Text*

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:7-16 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
- Jesus Christ
- The leaders of the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers
- The believers who are listening to these words

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 Christ gave us all various gifts of service because of his generosity. We know this because in part of the holy writings it says, 'When he went up above the highest places, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.' These words are about Christ and they mean that before he went up, he had to have come down lower to the earth. Christ, who came to live on earth, then went up above the sky so that he might fill all things and make them complete or perfect."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Christ, "What were you feeling or thinking when you did these things?" The person might answer things like, "I care very much about the people on earth, so I not only came down to them, but gave them gifts and abilities," or "I delight in seeing my people receive these gifts and use them."

Then Paul says, "Christ is the one who gave gifts of service to the believers and he gave to some the task of being apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Their job is to prepare the people of Christ to do God's work and cause the believers to grow strong. This work must continue until all us believers come together as one by believing in the truth and knowing Christ, the Son of God, until we become mature, and until we measure up to Christ's standard."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing leaders, "What are you feeling or thinking as you listen?" The person might answer things like, "I see how important these tasks are, since Christ himself gave them to us!" or "I want to do my best and use my abilities to help the church become mature!" or "I am glad we do not have to learn or teach how to become like Christ by ourselves and we have many people to help."

Paul says, "If we do that, then we will not be like babies who cannot protect themselves. We will not be like small boats that the waves and wind carry in many wrong directions. People who teach lies are like these waves, but they will not be able to trick us into believing false teaching."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the believers who are listening, "What are you feeling or thinking as you listen?" The person might answer things like, "I see how important it is to grow; I don't want to be helpless like a baby or in a storm like that!" or "I'm thankful there are people to help us grow and learn!" or "I want to learn about the truth so that I can avoid believing liars."

Next, Paul says, "Instead, we should lovingly speak true words about Christ so that we will grow and become more like Christ in every way. Christ is the head of the body, which is the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part of the body does its work and joins together, the whole body grows healthy and strong as the members share more love for one another."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like "I hope the people listen well since these are important instructions," or "I understand that these instructions are for all of us, even me," or "I am excited to see how the church continues to grow more loving and strong."

Ask the person playing the believers who are listening, "What are you feeling or thinking as you listen?" The person might answer things like, "I'm worried—it's difficult to speak the truth in a loving way! Sometimes I get really angry," or "I'm looking at my body right now and seeing how it all works together so well. I'm so amazed that Christ wants the church to work like this too!" or "I understand that like a body, the church must grow to be healthy and strong."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:7-16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Paul says that Christ gave various kinds of **grace** to all believers. Grace refers to God's favor that he shows to people who don't deserve it, which he gives freely. This can often refer to the salvation that God gives, but notice here it specifically refers to the gifts of service or ability that Jesus gives to believers. For more information on grace, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for grace as you used in previous passages.

Christ gave these gifts because he is the savior that God promised. 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 ascended, or went up, higher than the **heavens**. In this case heavens refers to the sky.

Stop here and discuss what word you will use for **heavens** when it means the sky. For more information on heaven, refer to the Master Glossary. 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 Christ gave the gifts or abilities for believers to be **apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers**.

An **apostle** is someone who is a witness to other people that Jesus really had risen from the dead. Although in Paul's time there were still some apostles who had seen Jesus, today the church still has people who do work like the apostles did. An apostle preaches the gospel to all people and establishes churches. Apostles have authority from God to make decisions about spiritual matters. For more information on apostle, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word for apostle as you have in previous passages.

A **prophet** is a person who gives messages from God to the people. For more information on prophet, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word for prophet as you have in previous passages.

An **evangelist** is someone who tells other people the good news about Jesus.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **evangelist**. For more information on evangelist, refer to the Master Glossary. 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 **pastor** is like someone who takes care of sheep, making sure they are safe and cared for. In the church, a pastor cares for the other believers' needs, often through teaching spiritual truth, like the teachers do. A **teacher** in the Bible is always a religious teacher, someone who explains the Scriptures to people. Paul probably lists the pastors and teachers together, since all pastors were teachers of spiritual truth, though not all teachers were pastors and took care of people.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **pastor** and **teacher**. For more information on teacher, refer to the Master Glossary. 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.

These leaders should equip, or prepare the **body**, which is another word for the group of people who believe in Jesus. Paul calls the believers the "body of Christ," since like a body, there are many members with different roles, but they are all connected and do Christ's work on earth. Use the same word or phrase for body as you used in previous passages.

This will continue until the believers become **unified** in their faith. To be united means to work together for a common purpose. United people agree on what the purpose is and work together without fighting. Use the same word or phrase for unity as you used in previous passages.

Faith means to rely on someone, to trust and believe that what that person says is true. The specific faith that Paul is talking about is when someone believes in Jesus. That person believes that Jesus is the son of God and trusts that he has died for their sins and that God has forgiven and accepted them. As a result, the person is committed to doing everything that Jesus has commanded. For more information on faith, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for faith as you used in previous passages.

This will also continue until the believers unify in their knowledge of the **Son of God**. The Son of God is a title for Jesus. Jesus is called the Son of God because he has a special relationship with God the Father—no one else has this same relationship. God and Jesus love each other in the way that a father and a son love each other.

Stop here and review the phrase you have used for **Son of God** in other books of the Bible. For more information on Son of God, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Son of God as you used in previous passages. Pause this audio here.

The believers should do this so that they will become **mature**, or grown up. This does not mean just that they will grow physically older, but become wiser and more capable like an adult does.

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.

Ephesians 4:7-16

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (14089715 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Ephesians 4:17-24

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 4:17-24 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:17-24 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 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 Ephesians 4:17-24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the last section, Paul explained that Christ gives gifts to the church which help make the unity of the church stronger. Now Paul returns to discussing how the believers in Jesus should live in a worthy way, by comparing two ways of living. First he describes the way the believers used to live, before they believed in Jesus, then he urges the believers to live in a new way.

Paul says that he urges, or insists on these things in the Lord. This means that he is speaking with the authority that the Lord Jesus has given him. Paul is showing how important these instructions are, reminding his listeners that these are not simply his suggestions, but important instructions from the Lord.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time when a leader or a person in authority gave you a project or role where you had to lead other people. How did you show that while you were in charge, you were still doing what the leader would want? Pause this audio here.

Paul insists that the believers must not live like the Gentiles. Gentiles means outsiders, or people who are not God's chosen people. Gentiles are not Jews. In this case, the description of Gentiles refers to the people who do not believe in Jesus, who do not live as God says they should. Most of the believers to whom Paul is writing are not Jews, and they lived like unbelieving Gentiles before God invited them to be his people. Since the Gentiles who do not follow Jesus instead follow false gods who have no power to help them, their way of thinking is futile, or useless, a waste of time. Like a person in the dark who cannot see or understand the things around them, the Gentiles are unable to see or understand God's truth. They do not have the good new life that God gives his people; that includes salvation and eternal life.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do you describe someone who is able to, but chooses not to, learn better ways of doing things? What could you compare them to? Pause this audio here.

Paul says the Gentiles are like this because they are ignorant and they make their hearts hard. In the Bible, the heart means where a person's thoughts, feelings, and decisions happen. These people have made their hearts hard like a wall that does not let anything in. They are ignorant and do not know God because they stubbornly choose not to learn about him. They are no longer able to feel shame about anything they do, so the Gentiles do not stop doing all kinds of sinful, evil, indecent things because they do not feel any guilt for these wrong actions.

Paul says that the way the Gentiles live is not the way of living that the believers learned when they heard about Christ. The believers are not stubbornly refusing to know God like the Gentiles. Paul knows they've learned what Jesus taught about the right way to live on earth, so now the believers should live in a way that is different to the Gentiles' way.

The believers that Paul writes to may be new believers. Paul is using this picture of new life to remind them of their recent baptism where they publicly commit to this new way of life.

Paul compares the way people choose to live like clothes that a person takes on and off. The way the Gentiles live is the way the believers used to behave and live. This was before the believers knew and understood the truth that comes from Jesus. In the old way of living, bad or harmful desires controlled people. This old way of living deceives people, making them think that bad or harmful desires are actually good. The believers should not continue in this old way of living that harms them. Paul tells them to throw out that way of living like you would throw out old, worn-out clothing.

Paul says the believers should do two more things after they throw out the old way of living: let God renew their way of thinking, and put on the new way of living. God will change the believer's thoughts and attitudes so they can follow the example of Christ and start living in the new way God tells them to. The believers cannot change on their own, so God works in their lives to change them.

Just as a person chooses and puts on new clothes which others can see are different and better, so the believer should put on, or choose to live, in a new way. This new way of living is not just actions, or simply an outer layer. It is like becoming a new person, with new ways of thinking and acting. The believer must start to behave like the new person that God made them to be when they believed in Jesus. God has created this new person to be like himself and to show that this is the true way to live: behaving in the right way with each other and living the right life that God requires.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person who had to change their way of living because of a life event, such as having a baby. Listen to how they describe how the person acts and thinks differently to how they did before.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:17–24 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 2 parts.

In the first part: Paul describes the Gentiles' way of living, which the believers must avoid.

In the second part: Paul describes how the believers should live instead, getting rid of their old way of living, letting the Holy Spirit change their thinking, and living in the new way.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Gentiles, who are not believers
- The Lord Jesus, or Christ
- The believers who are listening to these words
- God

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

After Paul talked about the different members of the body in the last section, he returned to the subject of this part of his letter—how to live a life worthy of God's calling. In the first part of the passage, Paul strongly insists that the believers must not live like the Gentiles. Paul describes how the Gentiles live as well as why they live that way. In this culture, writers like Paul taught people how to live good lives by contrasting two opposite ways of living. This is what Paul does in this part of the letter: comparing these two ways of living to show how much better Christ's way is.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, describe two different ways of doing something important, such as cooking a meal or planting a crop. Describe one right way to do the action and one wrong way to do it. Include the reasons why people might do it either way. Listen for the way that the speaker shows that one way is better than the other. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the Gentiles' thinking is futile, or useless, like people wandering in the dark. They do not know about God because they have stubbornly refused to learn, like people choosing to stay in the dark. Because of this, they no longer feel the shame of bad actions, so they willingly do terrible things. They are greedy for terrible things; they always want more and never feel satisfied. Paul compares these people to callused skin that does not feel textures anymore. Just as callused skin cannot feel, these people cannot feel any shame. Paul probably describes this way of living first because this is how the believers used to live before they trusted in Jesus.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Describe or show a callus, or a rough spot on someone's skin, that someone has developed from many years of hard work. How does it feel when you touch it? When the callus touches something hot or soft, how well can you feel it? Imagine if all the skin on your hands were callused and you were trying to feel the difference between a soft cloth and a rough cloth, or to feel whether a surface was smooth! How will you talk about how the non-believing Gentiles who no longer feel the shame of their wrongdoing? Pause this audio here.

In the second part of this passage, Paul describes how the believers should live instead. He says firmly that the Gentile's way of living is the opposite to Christ's way. Paul emphasizes that he knows that the believers learned a different way to live when they learned about Christ. Because they have learned about Christ, the believers should do three things: stop living in the old way, let God make new their thoughts and attitudes, and start living in the new way.

The old way of living destroyed people by causing them to have harmful desires. The believers must stop living that way and instead let God change their way of thinking, which will help them change their way of living. The believers must choose to start living in a new way. God wants the believers to be more like himself, truly righteous and holy, which means to live in a right and good way with those around them and with God. People cannot live in the right way on their own. God has to help believers to change their thoughts and attitudes, and the believer has to accept the help from God to change.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, have one person show someone else how they can draw something, like a face or a certain plant. Then give the pen or drawing tool to the other person and have them draw the picture they just learned about. Have the first person continue to give help and instructions as the second person draws. After they finish drawing it, discuss as a group how the second person was able to draw the picture. What did the second person need from the teacher? What actions did the second person need to take? 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 to represent Paul, his audience, Jesus, the Gentiles, and God.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these characters. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, have the non-believing Gentiles in one group and the believers in another group. Paul speaks to the believers who are listening to the letter and points out how bad the Gentiles' way of living is. Show how the Gentiles are like people in the dark, who cannot find or understand truth. Show how the Gentiles are separate from the group of believers since the Gentiles do not have the new life God gives. The Gentiles' hearts are hard, like a wall that will not let anything through. Notice how calluses or rough skin cannot feel textures as well as soft skin, just like the Gentiles do not feel ashamed of their actions. This way of living, Paul says, pointing at the Gentiles, is not what the believers learned about when they learned about Christ. Now Paul points to Christ and explains that the believers must live in a new way, like Jesus lived. Some of the non-believing Gentiles should show how they take off their bad actions and begin to do the different things that God wants them to do. They are like different people, and they move over to the group of believers. Show God giving each believer new clothes, changing the believers to be more like him. Paul explains that God created this new nature to be like God, truly righteous and holy.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:17-24 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
- The Gentiles, who are not believers
- The Lord Jesus
- The believers who are listening to these words
- 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, "With the Lord's authority, I insist that you must not act like those who do not believe in God. They are completely confused and cannot understand spiritual truth. They do not have the new life that God gives. This is because they stubbornly refuse to learn about God. They no longer feel shame for anything they do, so they spend all their time doing sinful and evil things without stopping."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Gentiles, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I don't care about God or his way of living; I only care about doing what I want to do," or "I don't want to feel bad about what I do, so I won't learn about what is right and wrong."

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "It is very important that the believers understand how bad the Gentiles' way of living is!" or "I care for the people who will hear these words and don't want them to live in a way that destroys them. I remember how I used to live before I knew about Jesus and I don't want these people to do the wrong things or feel the way I did," or "I want the believers to understand me, so I will speak as clearly as I can, giving them examples and comparisons."

Paul continues, saying, "You however have learned about Christ and you know that this old way of living does not agree with the true words about Jesus. So get rid of your old way of living, just like you get rid of old clothes. That old way was destroying you by giving you harmful desires. Let God change your way of thinking and worshiping God. You must live in a new way, becoming like a new person, which God has created to be like himself. Being a new person created like God means behaving in the right way and being morally pure."

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 understand how the old way of living was deceiving and destroying us. Since we know the truth about Jesus, it doesn't make sense to live that way anymore!" or "Jesus showed us the right way to live, and I want to follow his example," or "This new way of living is hard sometimes, so I'm glad that God is helping us to make this very big change to the way that we live."

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I feel sorrow when these people live in a way that harms them. I want to see the joy on their faces when I change them to live in a way that is better for them, like when a parent gives new clothes to their children and sees the beautiful smiles of joy on their faces," or "I know the believers cannot change on their own, so I will help them," or "The way people live is important, as it shows how their lives have changed, so I will give them guidance on how to live in a right way."

*Filling the Gaps**Filling the Gaps*

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:17–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Paul says he speaks with the **Lord's** authority. A lord is a master over other people, who has full authority, so the Israelites used this word for God, because he has authority over the whole world. Paul often called Jesus Lord, so Lord here probably means Jesus. The Lord Jesus has given Paul the authority, or the right to speak about such things, which is why the people should listen to Paul. 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 says the believers must not live as the **Gentiles** do. A Gentile is someone who is not one of God's special people. Before Jesus came to earth, this meant anyone who was not an Israelite, since God chose Israel to be his special people. Over time, the word Gentile began to mean something negative—a bad person, someone that you should stay away from. Now, since anyone who believes in Jesus is one of God's chosen people, Paul uses the word Gentile to mean anyone who is not a believer, who does not live as God says to live. For more information on Gentile, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Gentile as you used in previous passages.

Paul says the Gentiles **harden their hearts**. In the Bible, the writers use the heart as picture language for the place where a person's thoughts, feelings, and decisions happen. Someone with a "hard heart" does not want to listen to what God tells them to do.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for a **hard heart**. Look up heart 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 Gentiles spend all their time in **debauchery**, **vice**, and **greed**, which means they excessively and selfishly do whatever sinful, impure, and evil actions they want. They are greedy, which means that they continue to want to do these wrong things.

But this is not the way of living that the believers have learned from **Christ**. Paul uses the names Christ and Jesus in this section, but he is referring to the same person. He might have used the personal name Jesus to show that the believers should follow the example that Jesus gave when he was on earth. For more information on Christ, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Christ as you used in previous passages.

Paul says that the believers should let God **renew** their attitudes and thoughts. As part of the process of redemption, God renews or changes his people's attitudes and thoughts to be more like him, as if they were a new and better person.

The believers put on the new nature which God created in the likeness of God, or to be like God in **righteousness** and **holiness**.

Someone who is righteous behaves in the right way. God is righteous, because everything that God does is right and good. God wants all people to be righteous. Someone who is righteous trusts in God and has a good relationship with him. This causes them to behave in the right way. So here, righteous means behaving in a right and good way with both God and others.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **righteousness**. Look up righteousness 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 is **holy**, which means that God is completely pure and morally perfect. Any place, person, or object that is dedicated to God is called holy. That means that the object or person is set apart for God's special purposes. Anyone set apart for God needs to have qualities that are pleasing to God. Therefore, anyone who is holy must show God's character, so holy can mean living in a good, morally pure way. For more information on holy, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for holiness 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.

Ephesians 4:17-24**Audio Content**

[webm zip](#) (10988443 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
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- [FIA Step 4](#)
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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Ephesians 4:25–32

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 4:25–32 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:25–32 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 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 Ephesians 4:25–32 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the last section, Paul told the believers that they must stop living the way that they used to live before they became God's people. Instead, they must put on a new nature, or start living in a new way. Now, Paul shows people how they can start living in this new way. Paul explains a wrong action, and then gives people a right action to do instead. Paul continues encouraging unity among the believers—everything they do well helps them remain in unity with each other.

Paul's first example of a wrong action is when believers lie to other believers, whom Paul calls their neighbors. They must put off or get rid of those lies like a person gets rid of old clothing. Instead, the believers must tell the truth, because they are all members of the same body. Like Paul said before, the church is like a body—many people with many roles who are still connected like the parts of a body. Telling the truth will help the believers communicate well, so that they can work together and stay united. Telling the truth also shows the non-believers a good example of the united community that the believers have.

When believers get angry, they should not let their anger cause them to sin. Paul says they should not let the sun go down, or let the day end while they are still angry. This means that they should not stay angry for a long time, but instead they should try to address the cause of their anger as quickly as possible. If they keep their angry feelings for longer, it makes the problem feel larger and makes it harder for them to restore their relationship with each other. Even if they do not solve the problem, the believers should not hold onto their angry feelings, but trust that God will handle the situation. When a believer stays angry, it is easier for the devil to tempt them to sin. The devil, also called Satan, is the leader of all evil spirits, and he tries to make people turn away from God by deceiving them. Anger could give the devil a chance to stay and tempt people to sin and cause problems in the unity of the believers.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time someone held on to their angry feelings but didn't try to fix the problem. What did they do when they had these angry feelings? How did their interactions with other people change when they were angry? Pause this audio here.

Thieves should no longer steal to support themselves. Instead, they should work, doing something useful with their own hands. Paul doesn't necessarily mean that they have to do physical labor, but he means that they

must work hard at something. Then they can support themselves and give generously to those who need help. When people give generously to others, they show that they have changed.

Next, Paul talks about the believers' conversations. The believers should not speak words that hurt, such as insulting others or abusing them with words. Instead, they must encourage others and build them up like a builder builds up a house to make it strong. Their words should be good for the situation and they should speak in order to bless, or do good to those who listen.

The believers should do these things so that they do not grieve, or bring sorrow to, the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit changes their thoughts and attitudes so that they can live in a new way instead of sinning like they used to. The Holy Spirit gives unity to the church. When people do wrong actions, they break this unity because they cause fights. This makes the Holy Spirit sad.

God has given the Holy Spirit to believers like a seal, which is a mark of ownership, to show that the believers belong to God. On the day of redemption, God will completely free his people from sin and the evil of the world. The Holy Spirit is with them as a sign that they will one day be fully with God. So the believers should not do anything that would insult or cause the Holy Spirit to be sad, because the Holy Spirit marks them as God's own people.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a group that you are in, such as a family, a choir, or a sports group. What things do you wear that show you belong to this group? What kind of titles or names show that you belong to this group? Because you belong to this group, what are some things that you look forward to in the future? Pause this audio here.

Paul lists the actions that would make the Holy Spirit sad and tells the believers they must not do these things. They must not be bitter and unwilling to be at peace with each other. They must not be angry all the time, which makes it easier to sin. They must not brawl, or have loud and angry fights. They must not slander, or tell harmful lies about each other. They must get rid of all malice or hateful feelings toward each other, like a person gets rid of bad or worthless things. All these actions cause problems and division. Instead, Paul says that believers should do good and show love and mercy to each other. They should follow God's example and forgive each other just like God forgave their sins because of what Christ did. This will help keep the church united.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:25-32 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 gives three commands for living in the new way as God's people.

In the second part: Paul tells the believers not to make the Holy Spirit sad by talking badly about others. When people speak badly about others, they cause division among the people.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers
- The devil
- The Holy Spirit
- God the Father
- Christ

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

As he did in the last section, Paul continues to describe how the believers can put off the old self and put on the new self, by replacing the former way of acting with a new way. For each command, he describes the wrong action first, and then the right one. These instructions are first about how believers act with other believers. However, the believers should be doing these actions all the time, in all parts of their lives.

Stop here and do the following activity as a group: Describe the things that a good person should not do, and then describe what they should do instead. Pay attention to the way you talk about what they should not do and what they should do. Pause this audio here.

In the first part of this passage, Paul gives three ways to live. He focuses on important good things to do that build unity and a strong community, in contrast to things that destroy that strong community. The believers should tell the truth, be careful when angry, and find honest work. Paul begins by telling the believers that they must stop lying to each other, like they did in their old way of living. Because they've learned the truth about Jesus, instead the believers should tell the truth to each other. Since they all belong to the same body, they must do things that are helpful for the body.

Then Paul quotes a command from a prayer song in Jewish Scripture that says, "in your anger, do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry." The believers would be familiar with this quote, so Paul does not include who wrote it down originally. The believers would know it is from the word of God, which is reliable. Paul is showing that this information is not new, but that God has always wanted the people to behave in this right way. Paul says that the believers should not stay angry for a long time, or let the sun go down while they are angry. Paul uses a comparison to show how important this command is. When a believer holds on to angry feelings, they give a foothold, or space in their life, to the devil, like giving space on their land to an enemy army.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, when you give instructions, what kind of sayings or quotes do people use regularly? How do they use these sayings? Why do people use these kinds of sayings? Pause this audio here.

Finally, Paul encourages thieves to change how they live. He says that thieves should no longer steal, but instead find a job to earn money honestly. Not only will the thieves then be able to pay for their own needs, but they can give to help others with what they need. This would show a clear change between the old way of living before they knew God, and their new way of living now that they know God.

In the second part of this passage, Paul gives instructions about the believers' conversations and attitudes towards each other, to help keep the unity that the Holy Spirit has given to the church. They should not speak words that harm other people. They should not hold on to attitudes and do things that show bitterness, anger, loud fighting, harmful lies, or hateful feelings. These actions cause people to fight and dislike each other, so that they are no longer working together. They would no longer be united. This disunity among believers insults the Holy Spirit and makes him very sad, because believers belong to the Holy Spirit. In fact, God has freed believers from sin through Jesus' death. Then God marked his people with the Holy Spirit like an owner marks his property with a seal.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: When your children or someone that you love very much does not have good relationships with others, how do you feel? Do you remember the way you described how God has sealed us with the mark of the Holy Spirit in an earlier passage in this letter? How would you use a similar description in this part of the letter? Pause this audio here.

Instead, the believers should encourage each other as each person needs at that time, so that the believers bless each other with their words. They must also be compassionate, kind, and forgiving. All these actions prepare the believers to be able to forgive each other. Paul says that believers should forgive each other as much as God forgives us. This is a hard thing to do, but Paul reminds us that we should forgive and be kind, because Jesus died so that God would forgive us too! When believers forgive each other, they honor and bring joy to the Holy Spirit by doing what he would want.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: When people are a part of a group or a family, they often behave in a way that is acceptable in that group or family. When a person doesn't act in that acceptable way, how do the other people in the group feel and treat that person? How about when a person acts in a way that shows how good the group is? How do people in the group encourage the members to act in a way that honors the group? How do you talk or encourage others to act in a way that honors important people in your life? 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, the devil, the Holy Spirit, Jesus, and God the Father.

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 describes how the believers can replace the former way that they acted with a new way of living. Make two areas for the believers. When Paul states a bad action, have the believers stand in one area and act out the bad actions. Then, when Paul describes what the believers should do instead, have the believers pretend to take off the bad action and move to the area that represents the good action. Have them act out the good action. First Paul says they must stop lying. Now have the believers move to the other side and instead show that they are speaking truth. Then Paul says the believers should not sin or allow the devil to influence them while they are angry. Show the devil trying to move in among the believers who are acting like they are angry. Now have the believers move to the other side and instead they should resolve the issue before the sun sets. Then Paul tells the thieves to stop stealing. Now have the believers move to the other side and instead they should show that they work hard and share what they earn with each other. Then Paul talks about speaking badly to each other. Now have the believers move to the other side and instead show that they are speaking kindly to each other. Show that as the believers speak kindly they are building strong places for each other to stand on. Have the person who represents the Holy Spirit give each believer a mark or an object of some kind, to represent that the believer belongs to God. Show the believers sometimes going to the other side where the bad actions happen. When they cross over, show the Holy Spirit being sad. Then show Christ asking God to forgive us. When the believers see Christ doing this, the believers should show that they are forgiving each other too!

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:25-32 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
- The believers
- The devil
- The Holy Spirit
- God the Father
- 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, "Since we have been given a new way of living, we must act like it: Stop lying to each other, but instead speak truthfully to each other, since we are all parts of Christ's body. If you are angry, do not let the anger cause you to sin. Do not continue to be angry for a long time, because if you do, you will give the devil more opportunities to tempt you to sin. If you are a thief, stop stealing. Find honest work so you can have something to give to people who need help."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I will tell them a different way to live from the way they used to live, since it is important for the believers to live differently than before to show others that they belong to God," or "I hope that the believers see that this new way of living will help them to live peacefully," or "I'm glad God has given us a better way to live and I want the believers to experience the joy that comes when they live like this!"

Ask the person playing the devil, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I want to cause fights and bitterness in the body of believers so that they will no longer work together well or have joy," or "I like when people hold onto anger, because they do not think as clearly and calmly, so they are more likely to sin," or "I am an enemy to the believers and I want to see them fail, so I will try to cause problems wherever I can."

Paul also says, "Do not speak words that hurt other people, but only words that are helpful. Speak words that strengthen each other, that are good for the situation, so that you can encourage those who hear your words. Do not make the Holy Spirit sad. God gave you the Holy Spirit to show that you belong to God. The Holy Spirit keeps you secure until the day of complete redemption, when God will completely free the people who belong to him. So do not continue to be bitter, full of rage and anger. Do not brawl or lie and insult each other. Get rid of all hateful feelings about each other. Instead, be gentle to each other and caring. Forgive each other, just like God forgave your sins because of what Christ did."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Holy Spirit, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I want what is best for the believers, so if they do things that hurt each other, it makes me sad," or "Since I am with the believers, I will help them to follow these instructions," or "I care for these people and will reassure them that they belong to God as they wait for the day of complete redemption."

Ask the person playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I understand why we do these things—not just to help ourselves, but to honor the Holy Spirit," or "Wow! This is a whole new way of living. I'm not sure I can do it, but it sounds wonderful, so I'm going to try!" or "I am glad that I have these clear instructions and that we are all working on this together."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 4:25–32 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Paul says the believers should tell the truth to their **neighbor**, since we are all members or parts of one **body**. Paul calls the believers the body of Christ, since like a body, there are many members with different roles, but they are all connected, and do Christ's work on earth. Use the same word or phrase for body as you used in previous passages. So here, neighbor means fellow believers, instead of the people who live in houses next to each other.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word you will use for **neighbor**. Look up neighbor 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 says do not let anger control you so that you **sin**. Sin is an act of rebellion against God. God has made good laws, and if people follow these laws, then people will be able to live together in peace. But people are constantly breaking God's laws and when they do, 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.

Paul says that holding on to feelings of anger can give the **devil** an opportunity to tempt us to sin. The devil, also called Satan, is the leader of all evil spirits. He tries to make people turn away from God by deceiving them. The devil is powerful and dangerous, always looking for ways that he can work against God and against God's people.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **devil**. Look up devil or Satan 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 believers not to act in a way that will bring sorrow to the **Holy Spirit**, who is the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is not just a power, but is also a person himself, so he can feel sorrow. For more information on the Holy Spirit, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for the Holy Spirit as you used in previous passages.

Paul says that the Holy Spirit is a sign that we belong to God, as we wait for the **day of redemption** or **deliverance**. To **redeem** or **deliver** means to set free. The day of redemption, also called the day of the Lord, is a future time when God will completely free believers from sin and the evil of this world. For more information on redemption, refer to redeem in the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for redemption as you used in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group the phrase **day of redemption** and how you want to translate this idea. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the believers should be **compassionate** and kind. When someone has compassion for someone, they have a deep affection or love for someone. They show mercy to people and are sympathetic, feeling pity for those in pain.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **compassionate**. Look up compassion 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 believers should also **forgive** each other like God forgave them through Christ's work. When you forgive someone who has done something bad to you, you stop being angry with that person. You no longer want to

take revenge or to give punishment. God forgives people through the death of his son Jesus. When people trust in Jesus and believe that Jesus's death has paid God back for their own sins, then God forgives them. God is no longer angry with them. For more information on forgive, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for forgive as you used in previous passages.

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.

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.

Ephesians 4:25-32

Audio Content

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Ephesians 5:1–6

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 5:1–6 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:1–6 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 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 Ephesians 5:1–6 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul has been giving the believers instructions about how to live in a new way that is right for God's people. At the end of the previous section, Paul said to follow God's example when forgiving others. In this section, Paul continues by telling the believers that they should follow God's example in the way they live, by loving others like Christ does. Paul then describes the actions that do not follow God's example which the believers must avoid. Those wrong actions have terrible consequences, and Paul warns that God will punish people who act in those ways. Instead they should thank God for the good He has given to them.

Paul begins by reminding the believers that God calls believers his children, because he protects and cares for them like a father cares for his children. So the believers should imitate God's right way of behaving just as children imitate their parent's actions. Because God loves them dearly, the believers should do everything—thinking, talking, working—in a loving way.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss how a child learns from their parents how to live and behave. What are the different ways that their parents teach them? Why does the child copy what the parent does? Pause this audio here.

The believers follow God's example by loving like Christ loved them. Just like in the last section, Paul is also giving the believers the motivation for following God's example of love: because God loves the believers. Paul reminds the believers that Christ Jesus loves them so much that he died in order to free them from their sins and give them eternal life with God. The Jewish people used to sacrifice, or kill animals and burn them completely, in order to ask God for forgiveness. God said that the smell of those burning animals was a fragrant or good-smelling offering. The good smell symbolized that God was pleased with the sacrifice. Just like those sacrifices, Christ allowed people to kill him so that God would forgive our sins. Paul says that just like the sacrifices of animals that people burned, Christ's sacrifice was like a fragrant or good-smelling offering. The believers should be willing to love and care for people just as much as Christ Jesus does.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss how people sacrifice in your culture, or give up something to show that something else is more valuable. Think about a time when someone used their time or resources to help you, showing how much they valued you. How did that make you feel? What reason did they give for sacrificing or putting aside their own needs to help you? Pause this audio here.

God loves his people and has made them holy, or set apart for himself. He has made them saints! Paul now talks about behaviors that are opposite to God's way of living for God's holy people, who should be following God's example. In fact, believers' behavior should be so completely right that no one would start a rumor, saying that believers are doing the wrong things! Paul says that the believers must not be involved in any sexual or impure behavior which God has forbidden, such as sex between people who are not married. They also must not be greedy, which is when people want more and more wealth and things.

Not only should the believers not act in an impure way, they also must not talk about sexual matters or taboo subjects in a shameful way. They must stop any disrespectful talk and bad joking that makes fun of important things. Again, Paul says these actions do not make sense for God's people, who are supposed to love others and not spend their time talking about things they should be avoiding!

The people who do those wrong things are so focused on what they want that they disrespect God by breaking his laws. The believers, however, should give thanks to God. Then the believers will be focused on thanking God for his gifts and blessings. This will help them recognize how inappropriate and wrong those other behaviors are because they disrespect God.

Paul then explains the consequences of these wrong behaviors. Paul says clearly: no one who is immoral or who does shameful things will inherit anything in the kingdom of Christ and God. Paul reminds the believers of the inheritance that he told them about earlier in this letter. All things belong to Jesus, and he shares good things with believers, both now and in the future. The believers inherit these good things when they inherit the kingdom of Christ and God. The kingdom of Christ and God does not refer to a country on earth. This kingdom is everywhere where God rules. In this kingdom, people obey God and live in a right relationship with Him. Because of Jesus, it is now possible for people to live in a right relationship with God and be a part of his kingdom. But this kingdom has not yet come completely. One day, Jesus will come back and reign over the entire creation in God's perfect kingdom. This kingdom is a good thing, and this kingdom is the inheritance that God promises the believers!

However, the people who do those immoral things will not receive any inheritance, either now or in the future. The person who is greedy will not inherit anything either. The greedy person loves things more than he loves God. That means he worships other things more than he worships God—he is an idol worshiper.

Stop here and discuss as a group: In your culture, what kinds of bad things does a person do that keeps them from receiving a gift or inheritance from their family? Tell a story about someone you know who did not receive a gift or inheritance because of something he or she did. Pause this audio here.

Anyone can repent, or turn away from their wrongdoing, as the believers have, and have a right relationship with God. However, the people who persistently act in those wrong ways without repenting do not have any inheritance. The believers must understand that these behaviors are wrong. They must not excuse anyone who lies. They must not say that the person who lies is not really lying. Those lying, disobedient people deserve God's wrath, or punishment, and God does punish those people, both now and when his kingdom comes completely.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:1–6 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 says to imitate God and to love others like Christ loved us.

In the second part: Paul lists behaviors to avoid, which are opposite to God's example and do not make sense for the believers.

In the third part: Paul explains the consequences of these wrong behaviors and how God will punish disobedient people instead of giving them the good things in Christ and God's kingdom.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- God
- Christ Jesus
- The believers
- Immoral, impure, and greedy people

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Paul begins the first part of this passage with the same idea as the end of the last passage: following God's example. Paul told the believers to forgive each other in the same way that God forgives them. Now Paul confirms here that the believers should imitate God, or do what God does. Paul compares believers to children who imitate their parents. In the same way believers should imitate God. The way to imitate God is to do everything in a way that shows love to others. In earlier passages, Paul gave the believers examples of how to live in a way that shows this love.

Paul then explains just how much love they should show. The believers should love like Jesus Christ loves. Jesus offered his entire life for us; he died so that he could make us free. God was pleased with the way Jesus offered, or sacrificed his life. When believers love one another, and sacrifice, or meet other people's needs before they meet their own, God is pleased with this offering.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Give instructions to someone on how to do something then compare how they should do that action by describing the way someone else has done it. How do you think this helps the others understand the instructions more? Pause this audio here.

In the second part of the passage, Paul then describes the kinds of actions that are not loving and do not follow God's example. Everything he lists is opposite to how God behaves. No believer should be involved in any sexual or shameful behavior that God has forbidden, nor be greedy, believing that everyone and everything around them exists for their own use. Because these actions are so bad that no one should even talk about them, the believers should not spend their time talking about those sexual matters with crude words or disrespectful jokes.

The people who do these things are focused on what they want to do and say, instead of what pleases God. Paul says it makes no sense for God's people to do these things. Instead, it makes sense that God's people would thank God for what God has given them. This will help them realize how good God and his ways are.

Paul is clear in the third part that the believers also avoid these actions because of the danger they bring. He uses an expression that means "You can be sure of what I am saying" to emphasize how certain and important his warning is.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: When you are about to say something important, like a warning against danger, how do you show it's important? What kind of phrases in your language do you use? How do you show that you are very sure about what you are going to say? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that no one who consistently does shameful, immoral, and greedy things will receive the good things God has promised for the future. He then pauses to give a quick explanation that greedy people worship things instead of God. Paul describes the dangerous results of these actions to show how important it is for the believers to avoid them.

Because these actions have such consequences, God is angry at disobedient people who try to lie and convince others to be disobedient too. Not only will these people not receive the good things that God has promised to his people in the future, but God will punish them in the current time also. The believers should be careful that they do not listen to anyone who lies and tells them that these wrong behaviors won't have consequences.

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 to represent Paul, his audience, the immoral people, Jesus, and God the Father.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, remember that Paul speaks to the group of believers and points to God when he tells them who to imitate. Have the person representing God move or speak and have the believers copy those actions. When Paul says the believers are God's dearly loved children, the person representing God can show this by standing near the believers, like a parent keeps their child close. Remember that Christ offers his life for the believers by dying on the cross, which you can act out as well. You can have the believers show "walking in the way of love" with actions, such as providing food for others, or listening patiently when someone is speaking. Paul points to the believers when he says that there must be none of this wrong behavior among them. The believers can show that they are giving thanks by praying or singing to God. God and Christ can give the believers something to represent the good things they will give to their people. However, the immoral people stand outside the group of believers and get nothing. Paul points to them and says that God will punish them both now and in the future.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:1–6 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
- God
- Christ Jesus
- The believers
- Immoral, impure, and greedy 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 says, "Since you are God's dearly loved children, you must act as he does, following his example. Whatever you do, do it in a loving way for others, loving like Christ does. Christ showed his love for us by dying for us, giving his life like a fragrant offering to God, which pleased God."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Christ, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "Even though not everyone loves me, I love all the people on earth and will show that love, even giving my life for them," or "I am consistent, so the way I love is not by pretending people's sin isn't bad. Instead, I paid the cost for their sin, so that they can one day be free from sin's power," or "I know that people will not always follow my example perfectly, but I still want them to try, because it is the best way to live."

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "If we should love like Christ does, we must be willing to give everything, even our lives, to show love for others. This makes me feel nervous, because I don't know how I will be able to do that, but I want to learn how," or "I am comforted by the reminder of how much love Christ has shown to us—that helps encourage me on the days when it is hard to love," or "I am glad we show love to others not in order to earn Christ's love, but because we are following his example of how much love he's already shown us."

Paul then says, "Your behavior should be so right that no one would ever say that you are involved in these kinds of wrong behavior. Do not engage in any sexual or impure behavior that God has said is wrong. Do not be greedy, for none of these actions are right for God's people. You should not talk about sexual matters in a shameful or crude way. You must stop any disrespectful talk or coarse joking that makes fun of important things. Instead, thank God for what he has done for you."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I sometimes feel overwhelmed by the way our lives must completely change, but I hope the people understand that these rules are not to make their lives harder, but to help them!" or "I am thankful that God has shown us a better way to live and given us clear instructions, instead of making us figure it out alone," or "I've seen how good it is to be thankful to God and I do thank him regularly, even here in these letters. I am reminded how much he has done for us!"

Paul says, "You can be very sure of this: No person who does these shameful things will receive the good things that Christ and God give to those they rule. A greedy person will not receive a part either, because he worships things instead of God. If people lie and say that God will not punish them for such behavior, do not believe them. If people are disobedient and act in these ways, then God's wrath or judgment will come and God will punish them."

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the immoral, impure, greedy people, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I don't want to follow God's right way of living. It's much easier to live how I want," or "I don't like it when people tell me my actions are wrong so I'll try to convince them that what I'm doing isn't bad," or "I think that getting what I want is more important than following God."

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I care about people and don't want them to live in a way that will hurt them and separate them from me," or "I am angry that disobedient people would lie and try to break other people's relationships with me," or "There is nothing that will bring people more joy and hope than me; that's why I don't want them focusing on the wrong things or worshipping things more than me!"

*Filling the Gaps**Filling the Gaps*

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:1–6 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Paul says the believers should love like **Christ** does. 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 offered his life as a **sacrifice** and **offering** to God. Sacrifices and offerings were gifts that people gave to God for many reasons. One reason was to ask forgiveness for something they had done wrong. The sacrifices helped to make people clean so that they could come before God. Jesus himself was a perfect sacrifice. Jesus died so that God could forgive the people.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **sacrifice** and **offering**. Look up sacrifice and offering 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 Christ's sacrifice was like a good-smelling offering or a pleasing **aroma** to God. Aroma means a good smell. When people used to burn sacrifices, the smoke rose to the sky and symbolically showed that the people were giving the gift to God and no one else. God would say the smoke was like a pleasing smell. He was showing that he was happy the people were doing what he said and that he accepted their gift. Paul is showing here that Christ's sacrifice was pleasing to God.

Paul lists the behaviors that God's holy people, or his **saints**, should not get involved in. For more information on saints, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word for saints, or holy people, that you have used in previous passages.

Paul says the believers must not have any **sexual immorality**, which is any sexual behavior that God has forbidden.

Paul says that greedy people are **idolaters**, or people who worship **idols**. An idol is an object that people make in order to worship a god. It can also be an item that people decide is more important to them than God, so those things are an idol. The greedy person loves things and ideas more than they love God.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **idol** and **idolater**. Look up idol 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 says that immoral, impure, and greedy people will not have any **inheritance** in the kingdom of Christ and God. An inheritance is property or wealth that an **heir** receives after someone else dies. Jesus is the heir of all things. Now God, the father, will never die, so this does not mean that Jesus will inherit these things after God dies. When the Bible says that Jesus is the heir, this means that everything rightfully belongs to Jesus. The whole world belongs to Jesus, and the kingdom of God belongs to Jesus. The New Testament also calls the people who believe in Jesus "fellow heirs with Jesus." This inheritance that Paul talks about is Jesus' inheritance, which he shares with all the people who trust in him as Savior. Use the same word for inheritance that you have used in previous passages, and remember that heir is in the Master Glossary.

The **kingdom of Christ and God** does not refer to a country on earth, but is everywhere where God rules. In this kingdom, people obey God and live in a right relationship with him. Because of Jesus, it is now possible for people to live in a right relationship with God and be a part of his kingdom. But this kingdom has not yet come completely since not everybody has submitted to the will of God. One day, Jesus will come back and reign over the entire world and creation in God's perfect kingdom. Paul often uses "kingdom of Christ" to mean Jesus's current rule, and the "kingdom of God" to mean his future rule. In this section, Paul probably says "the Kingdom of Christ and God" to mean that the disobedient people will not inherit anything now or in the future.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **kingdom of God and Christ**. Look up kingdom 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.

Paul says that God's **wrath**, or great anger, comes on people who disobey God. Use the same word for wrath that you have used in previous passages, and remember that wrath 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.

Ephesians 5:1–6

Audio Content

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Ephesians 5:7-14

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 5:7-14 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:7-14 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 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 Ephesians 5:7-14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul has just described the people who will not receive an inheritance from God. Now Paul tells the believers they must not join these disobedient people in their wrong behavior. Again, Paul uses a word-picture, or comparison, to show how different the believers are from the unbelievers. Like people who can see in the light, believers are like people who can understand and see spiritual truth—so they should live like it! The disobedient people, however, are like people in the dark, who need understanding, like light, from Christ Jesus.

Remember, Paul has just described the people who lie and say their sinful actions are not bad—these are people who live in the darkness. Paul begins here by saying that the believers must not be partners with those people by doing the same things they do. The believers used to be just like those people—they also lived in the darkness. They could not see and understand spiritual truth. They were disobedient and separated from the new life in God.

Now, however, the believers have light from the Lord Jesus! This light is true knowledge about God and the life he gives to believers. When the believers have this light, they belong to the Lord Jesus and their lives have completely changed. Both Paul and Jesus say that the believers are now lights themselves since they share Jesus's light with the people around them.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe someone whose life has completely changed for the better. Maybe describe someone who became a believer in Jesus and now acts differently. How do you describe the differences in this person now? How do other people react to this person who has changed? Pause this audio here.

Paul also calls the believers people of the light, because they are people who belong to God. Since they belong to God, they should act in a way that pleases Him. The believers should learn what the Lord God wants them to do. They will learn this as they live and experience God in their lives. Just like sunlight causes a plant to grow and produce fruit, this spiritual light causes the believer to grow and produce spiritual fruit, which is behavior that pleases God. This light causes believers to behave in a way that is good, right, and honest.

Paul very strongly says that believers should have nothing to do with the things that disobedient people do. These people are disobedient and they do not have the light or the knowledge of what pleases God. Their actions

do not produce spiritual fruit like plants produce good fruit, so their actions are worthless. God's people should not spend their time doing worthless things that do not please God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Paul compares the believers to plants that produce good things like fruit because of Jesus's light. Think about a plant that needs a lot of sunshine to grow. If the plant was in the dark, what would happen to the plant? How would the darkness affect how healthy the plant is? What kind of fruit would the plant be able to grow? Pause this audio here.

Instead, the believers must point out that these worthless actions are not what God wants. Paul shows how wrong these actions are by saying that people should be ashamed to even talk about them. However, people who are in the darkness need Jesus' light. When light shines on something, people can see what it really is. In the same way, when people secretly do evil things and believers tell them what God's word says, it is like the believers shine a light on those wrong actions. The unbelievers can then see that their behavior is wrong and does not please God. This is actually one way to show love to unbelievers, because it helps them understand that they need Jesus' light!

Jesus' light not only shows what their actions are but can also change the unbelievers so they can become people of the light as well. As Paul said earlier, the believers used to be in darkness until the light, Jesus, came. When the believers share the light with unbelievers, the unbelievers learn the truth about Jesus and can become believers who share the light as well.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about two people, one with a lit candle or torch and one with an unlit candle or torch. How can the first person "share" their light with the other? How does the second person look different now? What can the second person do now with the light from the fire that they couldn't do before? Pause this audio here.

Paul then quotes a song that describes the same process and also uses the word-picture of light. The believers probably sang this song when they baptized other believers, to remind each other of the power of Christ's light to change their lives. Before people follow Jesus, they are like people who are asleep. They are not aware of their sins. The song tells them to wake up! Become aware! Unbelievers are also like people who are dead because they do not have the new life that Christ gives. This song tells them to wake up, come to Christ, and get a new life from Christ! Christ is like a light, and he will give his light to the unbelievers. Then the unbelievers will no longer be people in darkness, but people in the light.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What kind of songs do you have in your culture that help teach an idea or remind you of important events?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:7-14 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 4 parts.

In the first part: Paul tells the believers that they should not join the unbelievers in their disobedient actions.

In the second part: Paul says that the believers are people of the light and should act in a way that shows this.

In the third part: Paul again tells the believers not to join the unbelievers in their wrong actions, but instead put those actions in the light, so that the unbelievers can see what pleases God. Once they know about Jesus' light, the unbelievers can become people of the light.

In the fourth part: Paul quotes a hymn that also says that the unbelievers need Christ's light, so that the unbelievers will no longer be unaware like sleeping or dead people.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers who are listening to these words and are people of light
- Unbelievers, who are the people in darkness
- The Lord Jesus Christ
- The Lord God

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Throughout this section of Paul's letter, Paul uses a comparison to help the believers understand the clear difference between believers and unbelievers, just like light is completely different from darkness.

Remember that in the previous part of this letter Paul said God will punish disobedient people. Paul does not want God to punish the believers, so Paul says that believers must not join with, or partner with, these disobedient people when they do evil things. Paul will later explain how the believers should act with the unbelievers in a correct way.

In the second part of this passage, Paul gives the reason why the believers should not join the disobedient people: the believers' lives have completely changed. Before, the believers used to disobey too and were also like people in the dark. They were separated from God and unable to understand spiritual truth, so they belonged to darkness, instead of God.

Stop here and discuss as a group: As an activity, have someone close their eyes and try to walk around and do a task that needs to be done in the light, such as finding a page in a book or gathering food from plants. Pay attention to and discuss how being in the dark and unable to see makes everything harder. Discuss the kinds of things you would not be able to discover or do in the dark. Pause this audio here.

But now, Paul says, the believers no longer belong to darkness! The Lord Jesus has given them new life and knowledge of God, which is like a light. Now that they have this light, they also shine or share this knowledge. Because the believers are people of the light, or people who belong to God, they must live like people who are in the light and can see how to do the right thing.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Have someone do the task from the last activity, but this time with their eyes open. How did they act differently from the person who had their eyes closed? Why would it be strange if they continued to walk and act as if they had their eyes closed? Pause this audio here.

Because God has given the believers light and life, they should naturally want to show how thankful they are. They do this by doing what God wants them to do. So, the right way for people of light to live is to learn how to please the Lord God. Paul pauses to explain that the light helps the believers with this. The light produces good things, or good actions, like a plant produces good fruit. It changes the believers' thoughts and attitudes so that they do things that are good, right, and honest, which is what pleases God.

In the third part of this passage, Paul repeats that the believers must not join the unbelievers. The unbelievers live in the dark, so they do not produce good actions or good fruit. Their actions are worthless. It makes no sense for people of light to act like people in the dark.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What words will you use for "people of the light" and "people of the darkness"? Think about the words you use to show that people are a part of a certain group. Think about the clear difference in the way people acted in the two earlier activities and the ways that you would describe both those people. Pause this audio here.

Instead of doing those wrong actions, the believers should expose, or show how those actions do not please God. The believers' right actions show the wrong actions of people just like shining a light uncovers what is in a dark place. Paul says that these wrong actions are so shameful that no one should even talk about them. But, when a light shines in the darkness, we can see the things that we could not see before.

Remember, in the last section, Paul said that believers should do everything in a loving way. So when the believers say to unbelievers that certain behaviors are wrong, they should do so because they care about the unbelievers. They should do it in a kind way, to help the unbeliever. Similarly, Paul now reminds the believers

that when light shines on things, people can see what those things really are. When people know how bad these actions are, it is harder for them to believe the lie that these actions are good. Paul reminds them how the light from the Lord Jesus can change people. Just like Jesus changed the believers from people of darkness to people of light, when the believers shine a light or share the knowledge of Jesus, the unbelievers can change too. When the unbelievers choose to believe in Jesus, Jesus makes them people of light instead of people of darkness.

In the fourth part of this passage, Paul quotes a song that the believers would be familiar with, which they probably sang at baptisms. This song uses the same comparison of light as well as two more comparisons to remind the believers of the power of Christ's light. The song says that unbelievers are like people who are asleep or dead. The song urges the unbelievers to wake up and become aware. They must stop acting like people who are dead and accept God's life. When they do, Christ will give his goodness and truth to them like the sun gives light.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you include this song in your translation? How will you show that this is a special quotation? 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 to represent Paul, his audience, the unbelievers, Jesus, and God the Father.

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 believers. Have the believers and unbelievers stand together in an area that is either dark or represents darkness. Have Jesus stand in a different area that represents an area of light. As the people stand in the dark area, they can close their eyes so that they imagine that they are in the dark. Then when Paul says, "Do not join together with the disobedient people," have the believers open their eyes and leave the dark area and join Jesus in the area that represents the light. Now Paul reminds the believers that they were once in darkness, but now they are in the light. As Paul describes the good things that happen in the light, like righteousness, goodness, and truth, have the believers act out the things that a righteous and good person does. You may even have the believers act out that they are trees producing good fruit. Show that the Lord God is watching what they are doing and he is happy with the believers. Have the unbelievers act out bad actions. Perhaps the unbelievers could close their eyes while they do these actions to show that they don't know what they are doing. Then show that the believers are not joining the unbelievers and are not even talking about the bad actions. However, the believers begin to shine light in the dark area. As the believers shine light in the dark area, show that the unbelievers open their eyes and see their bad actions. Now many of the unbelievers can come into the area of light themselves. The people in the area of light begin to sing the song. They can sing the song to the unbelievers who remain in the dark area. They sing to them and ask them to wake up! As they wake up, Christ Jesus can come and shine his light on them. Now those unbelievers can join the believers in the area of light.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:7-14 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 believers who are listening to these words and are people of light
- Unbelievers
- The Lord Jesus
- The Lord 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, "God will punish disobedient people, so do not join these people when they do evil things. You used to be disobedient, like people living in darkness and separated from God. Now you have the Lord Jesus's light and you shine that light. Since you have become the Lord Jesus's people, act like people who can see, not like people who can't. Learn what the Lord God wants you to do. Just as a plant produces fruit, so Jesus's spiritual light produces spiritual fruit. Jesus' light causes you to do good, right, and honest things."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "It makes me sad to see people who have the light of Jesus acting like people in the dark, stumbling around and hurting themselves. They are not looking at the truth about Jesus that they can now see," or "I hope the believers understand that they should learn what pleases God not just to avoid punishment, but because they are thankful for Jesus's light," or "I'm reminded of the way Jesus's light changed my life. His light was strong enough to save me, even though I was full of darkness. I praise the Lord Jesus for his kindness and power!"

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I want good things for my people, for them to learn the behavior that brings them joy and help them learn more about me," or "I have shown my people the behavior that pleases me in my scriptures and I will help them understand when they hear those words," or "The believers are my people—I protect and care for them and I am the one who brings good to their lives. I don't want them to do things that will hurt them and the people around them."

Again, Paul says, "Do not join in with the actions of unbelievers, who are like people in the dark. Their actions are worthless and do not produce spiritual fruit. When others cannot see them, these people do things that are so evil that no one should even talk about them! You must show that their actions are wrong. When you tell them that what they are doing is evil, it is like shining a light on them. Everyone can see that their actions are wrong and not pleasing to God."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I feel a little scared to show people that what they are doing does not please God, but I'm going to try to do it anyway because I know unbelievers need Jesus' light," or "This word-picture of light and dark is a good reminder—it would make no sense if believers acted like people who can't see when they actually have the light of Jesus!" or "I am encouraged by the way that Jesus's light is changing me, and when I see unbelievers receive Jesus's light I know they too will see good fruit in their lives soon!"

Then Paul says, "When God's light shines on the unbelievers, they can stop their evil deeds and become people of the light too. This is like the song that says, 'You who are like sleeping people, wake up and be aware of your wrong actions! You who are like dead people, because you do not have God's new life, come to God! Christ will give his light to you so that you can know him.'"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the unbelievers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I don't like how I feel when I know I'm doing wrong, so I'm not going to pay attention to the difference between right and wrong behavior. I am going to close my eyes so I can't learn," or "Learning a whole new way of life sounds scary. I'm pretty sure I couldn't change anyway. To become a new person is too hard for anyone to do on their own!"

Ask the person playing Jesus, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "It makes me sad to see people living like they are already dead because they do not have the new life I can give them," or "I want my people, who are people with my light, to share the good news about me, so that everyone can be in the light," or "I am always ready to give my light to anyone, no matter who they are or when they learn about me because I want all people to have a good relationship with me."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:7-14 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 were once in **darkness**, which means that they were separate from God and his new life. They were like people in the dark, unable to see and understand Jesus. Now, they have the Lord Jesus' **light**. Paul compares Jesus to light—from a fire or the sun—which he shares with believers so that they know about Jesus and have new life. They now have this light too that they can share with other people.

If needed, stop here and discuss as a group how you will talk about **people of the light** and **people of darkness**. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the believers are lights in the **Lord**. A lord is a master over other people, who has full authority, so the Israelites used this word for God because he has authority over the whole world. Lord here probably means Jesus, since later in this section, Paul says it is Christ Jesus who shines like a light.

Because the believers are people of light, they should find out what pleases the Lord. Here, Paul is probably referring to God the Father. The writers of the letters often used the phrase "pleasing to the Lord" when talking about God. 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 says this light produces goodness, **righteousness**, and truth. Someone who is righteous trusts in God and has a good relationship with him. This causes them to behave in the right way. Truth here means to live in a way that is honest and sincere. For more information on righteousness, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for righteousness as you used in previous passages.

Paul quotes a song that says "**Christ** will shine on you." 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.

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.

Ephesians 5:7-14

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (11971635 KB)

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Ephesians 5:15-21

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 5:15-21 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:15-21 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 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 Ephesians 5:15–21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul has just described how the believers' way of living is different from the unbelievers' way of living, just like light is different from dark. Because they are people of the light, Paul says that the believers must live very carefully. They need to realize how important every moment is because of how bad everything is around them. Instead of wasting their time being drunk and careless, believers must learn what pleases God. The Holy Spirit helps them to do this, so the believers should let him work in their lives. He will fill them with joy and help them behave in a way that pleases God.

As he often does, Paul urges the believers to avoid a wrong action and then gives them a replacement correct action. When he tells the believers to be careful, he says they must not be unwise. Rather, they must be wise, behaving in the right way because of what they learn from God. Only foolish people would reject God's teaching and live in a way that doesn't please God. Unfortunately, many people are foolish. Paul may be thinking about the believers' sufferings when he says that the current time is evil, meaning that the devil is ruling or has power on earth. During this time, the Roman Empire ruled the area. The Romans were persecuting the believers more than ever before.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about a time when someone dangerous or bad was ruling in a country, either yours or a nearby one. What words would you use to describe that time? How would you show that this was not a good or safe time? Pause this audio here.

Because the believers can not be sure how much longer they will live, they need to have a wise attitude about the way they spend their time. Instead of using it for worthless things, they should use every opportunity to do good and to share the good news about Jesus with everyone. Instead of being foolish, they must learn and understand what the Lord God wants them to do.

If the believers are to learn, then their minds must be alert and ready to learn. They must not drink so much wine or other alcohol that they become drunk, lose control of their actions, and behave in unacceptable ways which ruin their lives. Instead of letting things like too much wine control their actions, believers must let the Holy Spirit control their actions. The Holy Spirit helps believers to act wisely, learn the will of God, and live in the way that pleases God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what kind of alcoholic drinks do people drink? At what times or in what ways is it appropriate to drink, and when isn't it? When people drink a lot, in what ways do they act differently? Pause this audio here.

Believers' lives should be full of joyful celebration, not because they are full of wine and drunk, but because the Holy Spirit fills them and gives them joy. Then the believers will worship God with singing to remind each other and to celebrate together who God is and what he has done. The Holy Spirit leads them to sing songs like King David's psalms about what God has done for Israel or to sing new songs to honor Jesus for what he has done. And sometimes, when the believers are together, the Holy Spirit gives them words for new songs right then.

When the believers make music with their voices and instruments to praise the Lord Jesus, they do so joyfully and enthusiastically.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Paul says that believers can speak to one another with songs. Remember how in the last section of this letter, Paul quoted a song to remind the believers of what Christ has done. Why do you think Paul uses songs to remind people of truth? How do songs help people remember words and ideas? How do you use songs in your culture? When are times that people sing songs together? Pause this audio here.

The Holy Spirit also causes believers to always thank God the Father for everything that happens. They do this in Jesus Christ's name, because of what Christ has done. Jesus Christ restored the believers to a right relationship with God so that the Holy Spirit can fill them and give them the power to live in this joyful way.

The Spirit also gives power to every believer, even the leaders, to submit, or be willing to obey each other instead of insisting on getting their own way. Paul says they do this in the fear of Christ, meaning they obey because they revere, or respect, Christ. When they submit to each other, they show that they respect Jesus Christ because they are humble like Jesus. They submit or obey one another like Jesus obeyed his Father God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, try to complete a task as a group, such as building a small tower out of items around you. Do this two times. The first time, don't discuss what your plans are, but have everyone try to do it their own way all at once and don't talk to each other as you work. The second time, have people suggest different ideas for building a stable tower, taking the time to listen to each other and agreeing on one or two options to try. Discuss how the two attempts to build a tower went differently. How did you feel as you worked each time? What was the difference between the two attempts?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:15–21 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 tells the believers that they must live carefully, not unwisely like the people around them, but wisely, using every chance to do good and learn what God wants them to do.

In the second part: The believers must not fill themselves with too much wine or other alcohol, which will ruin their lives. Instead, they should let the Holy Spirit fill and control them.

In the third part: When the believers let the Holy Spirit control them, then their lives will be full of joyful celebration. They will speak, sing, make music, thank God, and submit to each other in a way that honors and pleases God.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers who are listening to these words
- Lord God, the Father
- The Holy Spirit of God
- The Lord Jesus Christ

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first part of this passage, Paul tells the believers how they must live. Because believers are people of light, as Paul said in the last section, they must be careful how they behave. As people of light, they see and understand the truth about Jesus, so they must live in the right way. Remember that Paul often follows a pattern

of telling people not to do something, and then giving them the right action to do. Paul follows this pattern here and tells the believers that they should not be like unwise people. Instead, he tells them to be like wise people, who change their behavior because of what God has taught them. Wise people are aware that people around them do evil things because they do not know about Jesus. Wise people also know how important it is to use their time well. They take every opportunity to do good, both explaining and showing what a true believer in Christ is like, so that people can learn about Christ.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about someone who has a lot of important things to do every day, like a mother who has to take care of a small child, or a farmer who has to plant his crops. What kind of things do they need to do? Why is it important for them to do these things at the correct time? How do they figure out how to do these things? Pause this audio here.

To show how important this instruction is, Paul repeats that the believers must not be foolish and unwise. Foolish people act without thinking, and they are careless about the way they spend their time. These people depend on human knowledge instead of knowledge from God. The believers, however, must become wise by learning and doing the Lord God's will, or doing what the Lord wants them to do.

In the second part of this passage, Paul explains what helps believers learn and become wise: the Holy Spirit. Again, Paul begins by telling them what doesn't help them: too much alcohol, like wine. When people are drunk, they cannot use their time wisely, they cannot learn, and they cannot communicate clearly with those around them. Wine, or anything besides the Holy Spirit, cannot teach the believers anything about God. Instead, too much wine causes people to behave in ways that ruin their lives, so they must not let wine control and affect their actions. Paul quotes this instruction from the scriptures. He reminds the believers that God has never wanted harmful things to control people's lives.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: When you are giving someone advice or a warning, what kind of proverbs or quotes from reliable people do you use? Why do you quote these things? How do they help make your advice more reliable? Pause this audio here.

God wants people's lives to be filled with joy. The Holy Spirit is God and knows exactly what pleases God the Father. He teaches the believers so that they can understand God's will and become wise. And when the Holy Spirit fills believers, he fills their lives with joy.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about a time when someone gave you a task to do that you had never done before. How would you feel if you didn't ask them how to do it and tried to figure it out on your own? What do you think the result would be? Now imagine you asked them to show you how to do it. How do you think the result would change? How would you feel if someone showed you how to do the task in a loving and kind way? Pause this audio here.

In the third part of this passage, Paul explains the effect the Holy Spirit has. When believers allow the Holy Spirit to fill them, the Holy Spirit shows the believers how to praise God, be grateful, and be submissive to each other. Believers will remind each other what God has done by singing all sorts of songs. Paul lists some of the different kinds of songs they sing.

The believers will sing enthusiastically and make music to worship the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says to "make music in your hearts," meaning that they make the music happily. They will give Christ all their attention as they sing to him.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss what words or phrases you will use for "making music in your hearts." Think about word-pictures or phrases you use in your language to mean that you do something enthusiastically or happily. Pause this audio here.

As they sing, the believers always thank God the Father for everything in the name of Jesus Christ, which means that they want to honor and respect Christ because of what he has done. Because of what Christ has done for them, they are also willing to obey and respect each other.

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 to represent Paul, the believers, God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

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 instructions to the believers, so he can point to them when he tells them to be careful. The believers must be wise and aware like people with their eyes opened, that the way they choose to spend their time is important. The believers look around and watch all the evil things happening in the world. Because of this, the believers become wise and think about how they should best spend their time. Show the believers looking around and seeing the evil all around them. The believers should then turn to God and listen to Him so that they can learn what God wants them to do. The believers pay close attention to what God tells them. As they listen to God, they put down things like wine, before they become drunk. Now show the Holy Spirit coming to them to fill them. Now they must listen to the Holy Spirit and do what the Holy Spirit says. Then, Paul says, believers will sing to remind each other of what God has done. The believers sing old and new songs and songs that they make up there and then. They can face the person representing Jesus, to show that they are focusing on him and singing to him. They also thank God the Father for what he has done, praying in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ because of what he has done. And when Paul tells the believers to submit to one another, he points to Christ to show who they are honoring. Show how the believers submit to one another.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:15–21 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 who are listening to these words
- Lord God, the Father
- The Holy Spirit of God
- 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, "Because you are people who belong to God, pay attention to the way you behave, not acting like unwise people, but like wise people. Use every chance you have to do good because in these times, people do evil things. Do not be foolish but become wise by learning and doing what the Lord wants you to do."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing God the Father, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I feel sad when my people are hurt, and when the devil tricks them into behavior that hurts them, so I want my people to be wise and aware to avoid that," or "I care about all people, even the people who do evil things, so I want my people to tell others about me. That way everyone can experience the joy that comes from

knowing me," or "I am not hiding my will from people; instead, I communicate clearly what I want them to do, like through this letter from Paul."

Then Paul says, "Don't drink so much wine or alcohol that you become drunk. Then the wine will control you and cause you to behave in unacceptable ways that ruin your life. Instead, let the Holy Spirit fill you and control you."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Holy Spirit, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "It makes me sad when people use things like wine to become drunk and forget their problems for a little while, instead of coming to me for real joy," or "I know God's people need help to live in this new nature and I am glad to show them how!" or "I also know that believers face lots of difficult situations. I want to comfort them by being with them all the time, always ready to help them."

Paul continues, saying, "The Holy Spirit will enable you to remind each other what God has done by singing songs of King David and songs about Christ, as well as new songs that the Spirit leads you to sing. Sing and make music to the Lord Jesus, doing it enthusiastically and with all your focus. Always thank God the Father for everything because of what Jesus Christ has done. Be willing to obey each other in order to honor and respect Christ Jesus."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "When I hear these songs, even when I am going through a hard situation, I remember all that God has done for us and I am filled with amazement and joy!" or "When I don't know what to say to encourage people or to praise God, I am glad that the Holy Spirit leads us to speak and sing with good and respectful words," or "Because I love and respect Jesus, I want to follow his example and because I love the other believers, I want to show respect to them. I do this by listening when they speak and being willing to obey them."

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I've felt the joy that the Holy Spirit gives me, which is why I so often thank God for what he has done. I want the believers to feel this joy too!" or "I've seen what happens when the Holy Spirit fills people. I am thankful that the Holy Spirit has given me wisdom about what pleases God, so I want to share what I have learned with other people."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:15-21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Paul tells the believers that they must be very careful and **wise**. In the Bible, being wise includes thinking things that are true and doing things that are good. Only God can cause someone to be wise.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **wise**. Look up wisdom 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 says that the time, or the world in which the believers live, is **evil**. Evil refers to anything that comes against God. It is the opposite of good. People who do evil behave in wrong or bad ways.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **evil**. Look up evil 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 believers not to be foolish, but instead to learn what the **Lord** wants them to do. A lord is a master over other people, someone who has full authority, so the Israelites used this word for God, because he has authority over the whole world. Here, Paul is probably referring to God the Father. Writers often used the phrase "pleasing to the Lord" when talking about God the father. Later, when Paul tells the believers to sing to

the Lord, he probably means 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 says do not fill yourself with too much **wine**, but let the Spirit fill you. Wine is grape juice that people ferment to make alcohol.

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

The **Spirit** is the **Holy Spirit**, the Spirit of God. For more information on Spirit, refer to the Holy Spirit in the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Spirit, or Holy Spirit, as you used in previous passages.

Paul says that when the Holy Spirit works in their lives, the believers will sing **psalms**, **hymns**, and **spiritual songs**. These are all songs about God, who he is and what he has done. **Psalms** are songs from the scriptures, many of which David wrote. **Hymns** are any songs of praise to God, including ones which Christians wrote to honor Jesus because of what he has done. When Paul says **spiritual songs**, he probably means spontaneous new songs, which the Holy Spirit inspires, or gives the words to people to sing immediately.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **psalms**, **hymns**, and **spiritual songs**. Look up hymn 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 to thank God in the name of the Lord Jesus **Christ** and to submit to one another in the fear of Christ. For more information on Christ, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Christ as you used in previous passages.

To **submit** means to be willing to obey or to put someone else's needs before your own.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **submit**. 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.

Here, **fear** means to have reverence, honor, and respect for God. This fear can be expressed as positive obedience caused by reverence for God, not because a person is afraid of cruelty or punishment from God. To do something in the fear of Christ means to do something out of deep respect for him.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **fear**. Look up fear of God in the Master Glossary for more information. Many translations use the word respect or honor here. 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.

Ephesians 5:15-21

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (11940014 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Ephesians 5:22-33

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 5:22-33 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:22-33 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 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 Ephesians 5:22-33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul has just described what the believers will do when they allow the Holy Spirit to fill, or guide them. The believers will honor and love Christ. That honor and love will cause them to want to love and honor each other in all their relationships within the church. Paul uses the marriage culture of his time as an example. The marriage relationship can show how the church relates to Christ. Paul is going to tell believing wives and husbands how to submit and love in their relationship with each other in a way that shows, or mirrors, how they submit to and honor the Lord Jesus.

Paul first talks to married women. He says that each wife must submit to her husband and place herself under her husband's authority, just like she places herself under the Lord Jesus's authority. She should obey her husband because he is the head of his wife, just as the head of any relationship has authority in that relationship. He leads and provides like the head of a body makes decisions and provides for the care of the body. Paul explains that the husband should be a healthy "head," one that takes care of his wife. He compares the husband's authority to Christ's authority. Christ has authority over all the believers or the church. Paul also compares the church to a body. Believers are united to Christ like a body is united to the head. Christ is the head, or leader, and has saved that body, the church, so that they can have a right relationship with God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do you talk about a group that has a healthy and good leader? Pause this audio here.

When Paul compares these relationships, he clearly explains the areas in which they are similar. He says that the husband is the head of his wife like Christ is the head of his church, but he does not say that the husband saves his wife like Christ saves the church. Nor should the wife worship her husband like she worships Christ. But she must be willing to obey her husband in every situation like the church obeys Christ.

Now Paul compares Christ's actions with a wedding ceremony. Before a Jewish wedding, the bride's relatives would bathe the bride to prepare her. Then the groom's best friend would bring the bride to the groom. Christ is like the groom, but since only Christ saves the church, only Christ prepares the bride who is the church. He washes her, the church, from her sins and brings the church to be with himself.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture how do brides prepare for a wedding? Who helps the bride get ready? What kind of ceremonies or traditions do you have for when the bride and groom meet at the wedding? Pause this audio here.

Christ loves the church very much. Christ died so that the believers, or the church, could be holy or set apart for God's purposes. How does a believer become set apart for God's purposes? When believers hear and believe the word, or the good news about how Christ saves them, Christ cleans them. Believers show that Christ cleans them when they are baptized with water. This water baptism shows that Christ has removed their sins like water removes dirt. This good news about Christ removing sins is something that we both receive and tell to others.

All of this preparation makes the church beautiful like a woman who wears beautiful clean clothes. Her clothes have no dirt or wrinkles and her skin has no sickly or ugly spots. In the same way, Christ makes the church beautiful, meaning morally pure, with no sins. The church is beautiful because God gives his people wonderful new life.

This relationship between Christ and the church is so important that Paul talks about how we should show that in our important earthly relationships. Paul shows the husbands just how much love Christ shows by reminding them what Christ has done for the believers. The husband should show this same kind of love to his wife.

In the same way that Christ has gone to great efforts to care and love his church, husbands should love their wives. Again, Paul talks about the human body. A husband should love and care for his wife like he takes care of his own body. People provide clothing, food, and shelter for their bodies. In the same way, Christ cares for the church, lovingly helping the church to grow and cleaning it from sin. Paul reminds the believers that they know how Christ helps them and have seen Christ do this since they are all members of Christ's body.

Now Paul quotes from a well-known Scripture about a husband and wife relationship. Paul wants to emphasize that a man leaves his father and mother to form a close relationship with his wife. A husband's primary responsibility is with his wife. He and his wife will become like one person, completely united, rather than two separate people who each do different things.

Paul says that this idea is a mystery because we will not completely understand everything until Jesus comes. Now, Christ comes and unites himself with his church like a husband unites with his wife. Paul says that this is a difficult truth to understand, like a mystery. God has shown how human marriage helps us to understand Christ's union with the church.

Paul returns to his discussion about the relationship of a husband and wife since the quote is also about them. A believing husband and wife show how Christ acts with his church when they love and submit to one another. So Paul repeats his instructions, summarizing and emphasizing the responsibilities of the husband and wife. Each husband must love his wife, just like he loves and takes care of himself. Each wife shows her deep respect for her husband by submitting to him.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What are the most important responsibilities or roles in your culture for husbands and wives? What would be the one thing someone would encourage a new husband or wife to do? Why do you think that is such an important action?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:22–33 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 3 parts.

In the first part: Paul tells wives to submit to their husbands, since their husbands are the head, or leader of their relationship, just like Christ is the head of the church.

In the second part: Paul tells husbands to love their wives, just like Christ loves the church. Paul describes what Christ has done to show his love for the church. Paul also compares how husbands should love their wives with the way that people love and take care of their own bodies.

In the third part: Paul quotes from well-known Scripture that talks about a husband and wife's relationship. He states that that quote also relates to Christ and the church. He then repeats his instructions to husbands and wives. Because a husband and wife are united like one body, a husband must love his wife and the wife must deeply respect her husband.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers who are listening to this, who are also called the church
- Wives who are believers
- Husbands who are believers
- The Lord Jesus Christ

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

At this time, many people wrote household instructions to explain responsibilities or expectations for each person in the house. Paul writes in this format so that the believers know what behavior is appropriate for members of believing households. At this time, the husband was the lord, or ruler of the household. For believers, however, Christ is the Lord of the household. Married believers submit to Christ their Lord by obeying

his instructions. Paul is talking to couples who are believers, so both should be following Christ's instructions about their behavior. The husband and wife will therefore serve each other unselfishly, without fear.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do you share or teach the roles and responsibilities that each person will have in a house? Who are the people who teach or share this information? Pause this audio here.

In the first part of this passage, Paul instructs the wives. Each wife must submit to her husband. This is one way that wives obey the Lord Jesus's instruction to submit to other believers. Paul compares the husband and wife to the church. Christ is the head of the church and its savior, so the church submits to Christ. While the husband is not the savior of the wife, God has chosen the husband to be the head of their relationship. The wife should be willing to obey her husband in every area since Christ is the head of both the husband and wife.

In the second part of this passage, Paul tells the husbands how they must lead in a way that honors Christ. Though he begins by talking about a husband's relationship with his wife, Paul shifts his focus to Christ's relationship with the church as he shows how the two relationships are similar. Each man must love his wife, following the standard of Christ's love for the church. Paul shows just how much Christ loves by explaining what Christ has done for the church. Christ gave his own life to save the church, and to make the believers holy. Since Paul is comparing Christ and the church to a married couple, Paul uses the comparison of a wedding. In this comparison, the church is like the bride, so Paul calls the church "she."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Though the church isn't a person, Paul calls it "she," like a woman, since he is comparing the church to a woman. What kind of things in your culture do you call or describe like a person, even though it is not a person? Pause this audio here.

Just as a bride must be clean before a wedding, Christ cleans the church when he removes their sins. Christ brings the church into a close relationship with himself, like a bride and groom are united in a close relationship. Christ makes the church ready like a beautiful bride is ready in clean, beautiful clothes. Paul calls the church honored, wonderful, or glorious to describe this. Paul is probably talking about both now and in the future. The church is holy and is in close relationship with Christ now. When Christ returns, they will be fully together with Christ, like a bride and groom.

Paul also says that a husband should love his wife just like he loves and cares for his own body and protects himself from harm. People naturally give food, clothing, shelter, and gentleness to their own bodies. In the same way, since the church is Christ's body, Christ provides and cares for the believers. Paul reminds them that all believers, including himself, are members of Christ's body, so they have seen how Christ does this.

In the third part of this passage, Paul explains why he uses the same comparison of a head and body for a marriage, just like he used for Christ and the church. Paul reminds the believers what the scriptures say about marriage when the first man and woman married. Paul does not introduce the quote because the believers were probably familiar with it. God created the first woman out of the first man's side. When a man and woman marry, they will be completely united and become like one person, with one united head and body.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what words or word pictures do you use to describe the way that a husband and a wife are united? Because they are in this new close relationship, how do they act differently to how they did before? Pause this audio here.

The way two people become one is a difficult truth to understand, like a mystery. Paul says that Christ and the church are also united like one person, which is why Paul has been comparing married people to Christ and the church. While they are not exactly alike, comparing what God has shown us can help believers understand more about this difficult truth.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, think of something that you know about but the other group members have not seen or experienced, like a beautiful place they have not been to or an animal they have not seen. Describe that thing to the others by comparing it to a similar item they have seen.

Ask the listeners: How does this comparison help you to understand something new? Think about the comparisons the first person made about specific characteristics of the item you knew. Now think about what characteristics they didn't include in the comparison. Since they didn't mention those things, how do you think the new item compares with those? Pause this audio here.

Paul finishes with a summary, going back to his instructions to husbands and wives. Each husband must love his wife as he loves himself and a wife must show respect to her husband by being willing to obey him and by treating her husband like he is important.

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 to represent Paul, the wives, the husbands, Jesus, and the believers.

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 to the believers when he gives these instructions. On one side are the husband and wife, and on the other side are Christ and the group of believers. Paul turns to the husband and wife when he tells the wife to submit to her husband. Then Paul turns to the believers and tells them to submit to Jesus. Show how these actions are similar to each other. Paul compares both a husband and Christ to the head of a body. Paul turns and speaks to the husbands, pointing to Christ as their example of loving. You can act out Christ washing the believers and bringing them to stand near him. Paul tells the husbands to love their wives like they love their bodies since they are the head. Notice how the human head helps guide the body and makes decisions to care for it, by feeding it, washing it, or keeping it from danger. In the same way that a person cares for their arms, legs, fingers, and every part of their body, Christ cares for each believer. Show how a man and woman are united when they marry by coming close to each other. Show the same for Christ and the believers. Paul finishes by repeating his first instructions to husbands and wives, pointing to each group as he speaks.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:22–33 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
- The believers who are listening to this, also called the church
- Wives who are believers
- Husbands who are believers
- 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, "Each wife should be willing to obey her own husband. When a wife does this, she is submitting to the Lord by following the Lord's instructions. The husband has the authority and leadership, like a head has for a body. Christ is also the head of all the believers and is the one who saves them from their sins. The church

submits to Christ because he is the head. Because the husband is the head, the wife should also be willing to obey in every way."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the wife, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I will submit to my husband because we are all supposed to submit to one another. I want to show people how much I love Jesus, and submitting to my husband shows that!" or "Even when it is hard or confusing, I will try to submit to my husband, because of the deep respect I have for Christ and his commands," or "I see the ways that my husband cares for me and tries to honor the Lord, which makes me want to submit to him and follow his lead."

Paul then says, "Each husband should love his wife as much as Christ loves the church. Christ gave his life for the church to dedicate it to God. Just like a bride must be clean for a wedding, Christ has washed away the believers' sins with water through his own words. He did this to bring the believers to be with himself, and so that the believers will be pure and without sin. They will be just like a beautiful bride wearing beautiful clean clothes without any dirt, wrinkles, or spots."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Christ, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "Like a bridegroom rejoices to marry his bride, I feel joy when I save people and bring them into a good relationship with me," or "I know that the believers cannot make themselves clean on their own, but I will gladly clean their sins away and I am able to do it without needing any help," or "Since I love the church, everything I do as the head of the church is to care for them, to make them holy and pure."

Paul says, "Each husband should love his own wife as he loves his own body, protecting himself from harm. People naturally provide for their own bodies, instead of harming themselves. In the same way, Christ loves and cares for the church, because we are like parts of his own body."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the husband, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I am amazed at this reminder of all that Christ has done for us—it makes me want to follow his good leadership and do what he says," or "Following Christ's example of love will require a lot of work and effort, but I want to try to love my wife just as deeply. I am thankful I have help from God to love her well!" or "I understand that taking care of my wife will help grow our relationship, just like when I take care of my body, I grow, heal, and live well. I look forward to seeing how we are both able to work together and love each other better."

Then Paul says, "As Scripture says, 'Because God made woman from man's side, a man will leave his father and mother and form a close permanent relationship with his wife. He and his wife become like one person.' This is a truth difficult to understand, like a mystery. I am saying that these words refer not only to a husband and wife but also to Christ and the church. So again I say, each husband must love his wife as a person loves and cares for himself. A wife must deeply respect her husband."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I am thankful that the Holy Spirit is giving me words to speak on this subject. God has always had the best plan for married people and his plan is what the believers need to hear," or "I am honored that God has revealed so much truth that used to be confusing or mysterious. I'll share what I've learned with the people around me so that they understand too," or "I hope the believers understand that these attitudes and actions for married people will help bring peace and cooperation, as they continue to follow what God says to do."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 5:22–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Paul tells wives to **submit** to their husbands. This means that they are willing to obey. Use the same word or phrase for submit as you used in the previous passage.

Each wife should submit to her husband because she is submitting to the **Lord's** instructions. A lord is a master over other people, who has full authority, so the Israelites used this word for God, because he has authority over the whole world. Lord here probably means Jesus, since Paul continues to refer to Jesus in this section. 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 says that the husband is the head of the wife, like **Christ** is the head of the church. For more information on Christ, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Christ as you used in previous passages.

The **church** means a community of people who believe in Jesus. Sometimes people use the word church for a group of believers in one particular place, and sometimes the word means all the people on earth together who believe in Jesus. Here, Paul is talking about all the believers on earth. For more information on church, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for church as you used in previous passages.

Paul also calls the church Christ's **body**, which is another word for the group of people who believe in Jesus. Paul calls the believers the body of Christ, since like a physical body, there are many members with different roles, but they are all connected and do Christ's work on earth. Use the same word or phrase for body as you used in previous passages.

Christ is the **Savior** of the church. Savior means someone who rescues or delivers people from evil or danger. In the New Testament, Jesus is the Savior who rescues people from spiritual evil. Jesus rescues people from having to pay the penalty for sin.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Savior**. Look up Savior 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 died to make the church **holy**. Any place, person, or object that is dedicated to God is called holy. That means that the object or person is set apart for God's special purposes. When people begin to trust in Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit, they become holy as well. Paul says that Christ presents the church as holy and blameless. Anyone set apart for God needs to have qualities that are pleasing to God. Therefore, anyone who is holy must reflect God's character, so holy can include living in a good, morally pure way. For more information on holy, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for holy as you used in previous passages.

When a man marries a woman, they are **united** like one person. To be united means to work together for a common purpose. They form a close and permanent relationship, working together like they are one person, not two separate people. Use the same word or phrase for united 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.

Ephesians 5:22–33

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (12173693 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Ephesians 6:1–9

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 6:1–9 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 6:1–9 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 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 Ephesians 6:1–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul continues to describe how believers should obey those who have authority over them. He also describes how people who have authority should lead others well. In the last section, Paul talked specifically to husbands and wives and encouraged them to live in a way that honors Christ. Now he speaks to children and parents, as well as slaves and masters. Paul will remind them that in both these types of relationships their attitude and the way they treat each other should be out of obedience to Christ. Just like husbands and wives, children, parents, slaves, and masters should all follow Christ's example of obedience and gentleness because of the respect they have for Christ.

Paul speaks first to the children, who would be old enough to have a relationship with the Lord, but still young enough that their parents take care of them. These children must obey their parents and place themselves under their parents' authority just like they place themselves under the Lord's authority. Since Paul is speaking to believers, their parents would also likely be believers. Paul reminds the believers that God said many years ago that obeying parents is the right thing to do. Paul quotes one of God's commandments from the 10 words of the law that God gave his special people, the Jews, when God made a special covenant with them. The commandment instructs children to honor their parents, which means to respect, love, and obey them. This is the first commandment God gave with a promise or a reward. If the children follow this command, then their lives will be long and full of blessings.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how should children treat their parents? When teaching a child to do these things, what reasons do people give for why they should behave in this way? Pause this audio here.

As for the believers who are fathers, they too must act in a certain way because they belong to the Lord Jesus. At this time, fathers had the responsibility to teach their children, but also had full authority to treat their children however they wanted. Paul reminds the fathers that there are limits on their authority because they now follow the Lord Jesus' authority. Fathers should avoid attitudes, words, and actions that are harsh or unfair, causing a child to be bitter or resentful. Fathers should teach their children in a way that is gentle, like Christ teaches his followers.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a good father and how he teaches his children. Discuss the ways that good fathers care for and teach their children in your culture. Pause this audio here.

Now Paul talks about the next household relationship. He talks to the slaves and masters, who should also show that they belong to the Lord by treating each other with respect. At this time, slaves were a part of the household, which is why Paul talks about their behavior here. Paul does not declare slavery to be either good or bad here; instead, he describes a practical way of daily living. He talks to slaves and masters who are believers and who should love each other and submit to each other. Paul focuses on their attitude. By doing their work in the way Christ asks, these believers show that they trust and respect Christ.

Paul says that slaves should obey their masters with "fear and trembling," which means a completely respectful attitude. Slaves should obey as sincerely as they would obey Christ.

They should obey honestly and consistently, and not just when their masters are watching so that their masters will praise them. Paul reminds the slaves that they belong to Christ, so they should do everything in the way that Christ has asked them to do it. They should do God's will, or what pleases God, enthusiastically to show that they are serving God, not just their masters.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time you were impressed by how well a person worked on something. Describe the way they worked or their attitude as they worked. What did they do that showed they were dedicated or focused? Why did they work in this way? Pause this audio here.

Paul also reminds the slaves that even if their human masters do not recognize their good attitudes and work, the Lord sees all that they do. God will reward everyone for the good work they do, regardless of whether they are a slave or not.

The masters should also remember that the Lord sees all that they do, so the masters should also have a similar attitude. Since they also serve the Lord, the masters should do what pleases Christ. Because believers should care for one another, the masters should not abuse their power by manipulating, humiliating, or scaring their slaves. The masters should remember that they and their slaves belong to the same Master in heaven. And the Lord judges everyone by the same standard.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 6:1–9 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 4 parts.

In the first part: Paul encourages children to obey their parents because God has said that this is right. If they do, the children will have a long life full of blessings.

In the second part: Paul tells fathers not to treat their children in a harsh way that would make them angry. Instead, fathers should care for their children by teaching and instructing them about the Lord Jesus.

In the third part: Paul tells slaves not only to obey their masters but to pay attention to their own attitude as they do. Slaves should obey and do their work as service to Christ, remembering that the Lord Jesus will reward everyone for what they do.

In the fourth part: The masters should also act in a way that is pleasing to God, and one way that they should do this is by not threatening their slaves. They must remember that everyone has the same Lord who judges everyone and their actions fairly.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers who are listening to these words, including:
- The children
- The fathers
- The slaves
- And the masters
- The Lord Jesus Christ
- The Lord God

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Paul continues to write household instructions. He explains how people with authority should act, and how people who submit to others' authority should act. Here, as he talks to children, fathers, slaves, and masters who are believers, he again reminds them that since they belong to the Lord, the Lord Jesus is their master, or authority of their household. Believers submit to the Lord Jesus's authority by obeying Jesus' instructions to love and submit to one another. Paul explains how to do that in each of these situations, focusing especially on believers' attitudes as they do.

In the first part of this passage, Paul speaks to the children. Children should obey their parents "in the Lord," or because the children belong to the Lord. The Lord has said that obeying parents is the right thing to do. To show this, Paul reminds them of the instructions that God gave to the Jewish people. The believers who are listening would likely be familiar with it, so Paul does not introduce the commandment and only includes the parts of the instruction that he will discuss. God has said that children should honor their parents, which means respect and obey them. This commandment was the first law that God gave his people that also gave a reason for obeying. God promised that when the children obey their parents, God will bless them and give them a long life. Paul reminds the Ephesians that this was the first command from God that came with a clear promise of a reward.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What kind of sayings or proverbs do you have in your culture about how children should act? What kind of people are these quotes from? Why do you think people use these sayings or proverbs to encourage or teach others? Pause this audio here.

Paul speaks specifically to fathers in the second part of this passage. Fathers should not use their authority to severely discipline or abuse, causing anger and bitterness in their children. Paul gives them an opposite action to do instead. Fathers should use their authority to teach their children in the Lord Jesus, or in the way that believers should act. They should follow Christ's example of gentle and loving teaching.

In the third part of this passage, Paul addresses slaves' attitudes, and the way that they submit to their masters. Paul compares slaves obeying their masters to believers obeying Christ. The slaves should obey in a deeply respectful and sincere way, just like they obey Christ. They should be consistent, not just working hard when someone is watching them, or to receive praise. These actions and attitudes show that the slaves belong to Christ and that they are trying to do what pleases the Lord. Since a believers' main focus should be to serve the Lord by obeying his commands, the slaves should serve willingly because they serve Christ, not just their owners.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Paul talks about obeying someone with "fear and trembling." Talk about someone you respect so much that you are almost afraid of them. What kind of descriptions do you use? Discuss what words or phrases you will use to show this deep respect. Pause this audio here.

Stop again and discuss as a group: Paul also talks about serving someone with sincerity of heart. Talk about a time when you worked hard for someone else, even when they were not watching you, because you wanted to. Pay attention to how you talked about that, and discuss how you will talk about sincerity of heart in your translation. Pause this audio here.

Paul also encourages the slaves about how good it is that they belong to and serve the Lord. The Lord Jesus will recognize and reward them for their attitude and obedience to their human master, even if their human master does not recognize their obedience. The Lord is fair. He rewards both slaves and free people for their actions.

In the fourth part of this passage, Paul says that masters should also remember that the Lord is fair in his actions. Both the slave and the master belong to God, the highest master. God does not treat people differently because of who they are or what jobs they have. Every believer must serve the Lord and do what pleases Him. So masters should think about how they serve the Lord with their actions, just like the slaves do. Remember, Paul encouraged the believers earlier to be kind and compassionate towards one another. So, one way to serve the Lord is to speak kindly, and to not threaten their slaves with harsh language or punishment.

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 represent Paul, Lord God, Christ, the children, the fathers, the slaves, and the masters.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, remember that Paul speaks to the children first. He tells them to obey both of their parents. Show the children obeying what the parents tell them to do. Paul says that this is right because the Lord has said it is so, and as a result of this obedience, the children will live long and blessed lives. Show the good things God gives the children when they obey. Paul then speaks to the fathers. They should not cause their children to become bitter, with harsh words or actions. Instead, show the fathers teaching their children in the way the Lord wants, explaining things to the children in a patient and loving way. Next, Paul speaks to the slaves. Show slaves obeying what their master says in a respectful and sincere way. Have the master turn away from the slaves,

and the slaves continue to work hard anyway. Since they belong to Christ, the slaves do their work for Christ, and they look to him as they work. Christ sees the slaves as they work. Show how he rewards the slaves for the good work that they do. Finally, Paul speaks to the masters. Show the masters treating their slaves gently, not harshly. The masters also look at the Lord, remembering that what they do, they do for the Lord. Show how the Lord treats everyone in the same way, no matter what kind of job they have.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 6:1–9 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 believers who are listening to these words, including:
- The children
- The fathers
- The slaves
- And the masters
- The Lord Jesus Christ
- The Lord 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, "Children, since you belong to the Lord Jesus, you should obey your parents. This is right because God has said in the Scriptures, 'Honor your father and mother so that your life may be full of blessing and you may live a long time.' This is the first commandment that God gave with a promised reward."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the children, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "Sometimes it's hard to obey my parents when I don't understand why they ask me to do certain things. But I belong to the Lord and I want to do what He wants, so I will obey my parents," or "I am encouraged that God promises to give me good things when I respect his command by obeying my parents," or "I'm surprised that Paul is speaking directly to us, even though we are young! I'm so glad that God cares for us and that he shows it by teaching us."

Then Paul says, "Fathers, do not treat your children in a harsh or unjust way that would make them angry and resentful. Instead, take care of your children by training and instructing them as a believer should."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the fathers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "Sometimes I am not sure how to teach my children well; it is hard when my children do the wrong things. I am thankful that God cares about every aspect of our lives, and shows us how to teach our children," or "I wouldn't want to cause my children to become angry all the time—Paul has just warned us how dangerous that can be! I would rather help my children learn about the Lord," or "I feel reassured and encouraged when the Lord teaches us in a gentle and loving way. It makes sense that I should teach my children in the same way."

Paul continues, saying, "You who are slaves should obey your masters with deep respect, sincerity, and the same attitude that you would obey Christ. Do this all the time, not just when your masters are watching you or just so that they will praise you. Obey like slaves who belong to Christ, willingly doing what God tells you to do. When you do your work, think this: you are working for the Lord Jesus, you are not just working for your master. Whether you are a slave or not, you can be sure that the Lord Jesus will reward you for the good work you do."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the slaves, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I am discouraged when my master does not see the work that I do. But I have hope because Christ is my real master and sees the good I do. I know he cares for me and will make things right, no matter what my human master may do," or "It is so hard to obey constantly, so I am glad that the Holy Spirit is with us and helps us submit to one another," or "Because I belong to Christ, I want to behave in a way that honors Christ and shows the good things he is doing in my life."

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I care for the slaves who are in hard situations and want to encourage them that Jesus Christ cares for them too," or "I want to remind everyone that Christ doesn't treat slaves differently than anyone else," or "What a blessing it is that we can rely on Jesus to bring fair reward and justice, as he has the power to do so."

Ask the person playing Christ, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I see people's hearts and know how much they need me. Because I love them, I want all people to be my people no matter if they are slaves or free," or "I hate injustice so I will reward everyone for their good works, even if the other people on earth don't," or "I am pleased and rejoice when my people do what pleases God because it is the best way to live."

Next, Paul says, "You who are masters, you must treat your slaves right, just as I have told them to treat you. Do not threaten your slaves, do not say that you will hurt or punish them because you know you have the same master in heaven, who is the Lord. He treats all people in the same way and judges everyone by the same standard."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the masters, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "Since I belong to God just like my slaves, I realize that I must not treat my slaves like they exist only to please me," or "I would be angry if someone treated me harshly or cruelly. Why would I do that to my fellow believers who are like my brothers and sisters?" or "I am afraid that if I treat my slaves well, I will not get as much work out of them."

Ask the person playing the Lord God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I created everyone in my own image. I love them all and see them all as beautiful. I will be just and fair to everyone," or "I want all people to do my will because it is best for them. Then they will no longer live in ways that hurt themselves or others!" or "If masters treat their slaves harshly, their slaves will be discouraged and hurt. I don't want my people to hurt one another or make it harder to follow me. I love each one of them like my own child, because each one of these people is my child."

*Filling the Gaps**Filling the Gaps*

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 6:1–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Paul says that children should obey their parents because they belong to the . A **lord** is a master over other people, who has full authority, so the Israelites used this word for God, because he has authority over the whole world. Lord here probably means Jesus, since Paul often uses this title for Jesus. When Paul tells fathers to train and instruct their children in the Lord, he means to follow the Lord Jesus's example of teaching. Slaves should consider their service to people as service to the Lord Jesus, who will reward them for their good work. 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 quotes from the Scriptures, which say that people should **honor** their father and mother. To honor someone means to recognize or consider that person is worthy to love and obey.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you describe the action of **honoring** your father and mother? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that this is the first **commandment** that God gives with a promise. The commandments are the rules that God gave his people, the people of Israel, to show them how to live their lives. For more information on commandment, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for commandment as you used in previous passages.

Slaves should obey their masters with the same sincerity that they obey **Christ**. For more information on Christ, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Christ as you used in previous passages. Slaves worked for other people and usually had no rights to leave their work.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word you will use for **slave**. If you have translated this word in another book of the Bible use the same word here. For more information on slave, refer to the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Masters should treat their slaves in an appropriate manner, remembering that they both have the same master in heaven. A master is a respectful title for someone in a high position or status. In the New Testament, it is the same word that people sometimes translate as lord. Paul is talking to human masters, who are the people who own other people as slaves. The masters should remember that they and their slaves all belong to the same master. Their master is God the Father and the Lord Jesus.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **master**. Paul uses the same word for Lord and master, for when he refers to God and Jesus, as well as for a human master. Discuss whether you want to use the same or a different word for a human master and for the Lord Jesus and Lord God. Look up master 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.

Heaven refers to the place where God lives. 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.

*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.

Ephesians 6:1–9

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (11770399 KB)

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Ephesians 6:10–20

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 6:10–20 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 6:10–20 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 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 Ephesians 6:10–20 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

After describing how believers should act in their households, Paul summarizes his letter to them and gives them a strong encouragement. Paul compares the believers to Roman soldiers, who are famous for the way they fought together as a group and could fight through any sort of difficulty. The soldiers carried their armor and equipment to stay safe. In the same way, the believers must carry and use all the resources and protection that God gives them. When believers pray, God gives the believers power to use the armor that he has given them. Paul reminds believers to pray at all times, especially for fellow believers including himself.

Paul begins by telling the believers to be strong, then reminds them they get their strength and power from the Lord Jesus. God has given the believers resources, like a soldier's armor, to help and protect them. The devil will look for ways to hurt the believers until God's final victory. Only the armor of God will enable the believers to stand, or to successfully resist the devil's evil plans. This is exactly what Paul has been encouraging the believers to do throughout his letters.

Paul then describes the kind of battle that all believers are fighting. He says that our fight is not against "flesh and blood," meaning that our fight is not against other humans. Though humans may appear to be the believers' enemies, the devil and his spirits are the real enemy. Paul describes these enemies in four ways: as rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world, and evil spirits. These enemies come from the heavenly realms. This is not in heaven with God, but in the spiritual world where the evil spirits live. They rule over and control the unbelievers, making the world evil with their lies.

Because the battle and enemies are spiritual, Paul tells the believers to use or put on the spiritual protection that God gives them, which is like the armor that a soldier wears to protect himself when he fights in a battle. The believers must use these resources and be prepared to stand, not run away or give up on the day of evil. Remember, Paul already said earlier in this letter that the days are evil, so the believers must be ready to stand each day when evil comes.

Now Paul describes the specific pieces of armor, comparing each piece to something spiritual that believers will use to stand strong. The truth that God gives is like a Roman soldier's belt. The belt holds up his long clothes so that he can run and fight. The believers must remain truthful and avoid lies and false teaching to keep the unity of the believers.

Stop here and look at a picture of a Roman soldier's belt as a group. Pause this audio here.

Believers must wear the breastplate of righteousness. People made a breastplate out of tough leather or metal to cover the chest and sometimes the back. Just like a breastplate protects a soldier in a battle, behaving in a right way will protect the believers when the devil attacks.

Stop here and look at a picture of a Roman soldier's breastplate as a group. Pause this audio here.

Like shoes, believers put on the peace that comes from the good news, which shows how people can have peace with God. The devil will try to cause fights to destroy the unity of the Spirit. The gospel of peace is the best

protection against the disunity and fights that the devil brings. Instead of fighting other believers, the believers will be ready to share the good news and the peace God gives.

Stop here and look at a picture of a Roman soldier's shoes as a group. Pause this audio here.

Believers also need to continue to have faith in God, which will protect them like a shield. Roman soldiers carried large wooden shields in the shape of a rectangle, about 1.2 meters high. They covered the wood in leather and before battle, the soldier would soak the leather in water. Their enemies would attack by dipping arrows in tar, lighting the arrows on fire, and shooting the burning arrows at the soldiers. However, the wet shields would stop and put out the fiery arrows.

Stop here and look at a picture of a Roman soldier's shield as a group. Look also at a drawing of an archer with a bow and arrow. Pause this audio here.

The evil one, who is the devil, attacks the believers. Sometimes the devil persecutes believers, makes them believe false teaching, or tempts them to do wrong things. These attacks are like the flaming arrows in a battle. Believers must trust God to protect them from the attacks of the evil one, like a shield that protects soldiers in battle from the flaming arrows.

The salvation Christ gives believers is like a helmet. Roman soldiers wore hats of heavy leather or metal to protect their heads. God has already rescued the believers from the devil's rule, so the believers can be confident of God's victory over the devil.

Stop here and look at a picture of a Roman soldier's helmet as a group. Pause this audio here.

The last piece of equipment, the only weapon of attack, is the sword, which is the word of God. The Holy Spirit gives believers this sword by leading them to learn and understand God's word in the scriptures. Then the believer will be ready to speak it as a defense when the devil tries to tempt them away from loyalty to Christ.

Stop here and look at a picture of a Roman soldier's sword as a group. Pause this audio here.

Finally, while the believers do all of this, they must also pray. The Holy Spirit guides and shows them how to pray. Since this is a battle, believers need to be alert and never give up praying, so that they do not become discouraged or lazy about praying.

And since this is a battle where they fight alongside other believers, they should help and show care by praying for the saints, or the Lord's people. One fellow believer who especially needs prayer is Paul. He asks them to pray that God will give him the words to say. Then he can speak without fear, explaining the truth in the good news. This news was like a mystery until God revealed it to the believers. Since he has this truth, Paul says he is an ambassador, a person who speaks on behalf of his ruler, who is Christ. He must continue to declare the good news fearlessly even while in prison.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 6:10–20 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 urges the believers to put on the armor that God gives. He explains how the believers need spiritual armor in this spiritual battle, describing the spiritual enemies that believers face. When the believers wear this armor, they are able to successfully resist the devil, his evil plans, and his followers.

In the second part: Paul describes six pieces of equipment that a Roman soldier of that time used, and compares each piece to something spiritual that will help the believers in their fight against the devil.

In the third part: Paul reminds believers to pray at all times and for fellow believers, including himself.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers who are listening to these words
- The Lord Jesus
- God
- The devil, who is the evil one
- The rulers, authorities, powers, and spiritual forces of evil
- The Holy Spirit

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Since Paul is finishing his letter, he summarizes many of the behaviors he has encouraged the believers to show. Throughout this section of his letter, Paul uses a comparison based on the equipment or armor of a Roman soldier. The believers would have often seen these soldiers, which would remind them of Paul's words here. Paul describes six pieces of armor that the Roman soldier used and compares each to something spiritual. These pieces of spiritual armor will help the believers fight against the devil when he tries to hurt them. People who are fighting in a battle are always paying attention, so the comparison should make the believer feel like it is important to watch out for the devil's attacks. However, the believers should also feel confident and secure, since they know that Christ is the winner in this battle.

Stop here and look at a picture of a Roman soldier wearing all the pieces of armor listed below as a group. How do soldiers dress in your culture when they go out to fight? How is it different from the picture of the Roman soldier? What pieces are similar? Pause this audio here.

Paul begins the first part of this passage by telling the believers to be strong, then explains that they should get their strength from the Lord Jesus. The believers' relationship with Jesus is what gives them his power. They become strong by putting on armor, or using the spiritual gifts God has given them. Believers will need this protective armor because they are in a battle. Paul explains why it is so important that they do not rely on their own strength and resources. Their fight is not against other humans. They join a fight against the devil, so they need strength from God.

Paul describes the kind of battle and the strength of the enemy. He calls it "our battle," to remind the believers that they are all fighting this same battle. These powers, under the leadership of the devil, rule the current time. The devil's spirits have many names, but in this passage Paul calls them "rulers, powers, forces of darkness, and spiritual forces of evil." They all come from the heavenly realms or the spiritual world, not from earth like humans.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what words do you use to describe spirits? How do you discuss what spirits are like or what they do? Pause this audio here.

Now that Paul has warned the believers who they fight against, they need to prepare. Paul says that believers must put on God's protection like pieces of armor. This armor is behavior the believer must display, or attitudes that the believer must have. Then every day when believers fight against the forces of evil, they will not run away. When believers trust in God's resources and hold firm to their beliefs, they can fight against attacks like temptation, anger, and false teaching. After fighting each battle to the end, the believer will still be standing firm and ready for the next battle. So, after they prepare themselves for battle, they must concentrate on standing firm.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, what words or phrases do you use to describe when a person does not give up and continues to do something even when it is hard? Pause this audio here.

Now Paul describes the specific pieces of armor that they will use to stand firm.

The truth God gives is like a belt tied around their waists. The belt holds up a soldier's long clothes so that he can run and fight. God's truth supports the believers in their fight with the devil. Next is the breastplate of righteousness: right behavior and showing justice will give protection to the believer. Like shoes, believers put

on the peace that comes from the good news about how a person can have peace with God. Then they will be ready and prepared for any attacks. They will also be ready to spread that peace by sharing the good news with people around them.

Believers must also carry the shield of faith, which is confident trust that God will protect them against every type of attack. The salvation God gives is like a helmet that protects them from the devil since Christ has saved them.

Next is the sword of the Spirit. Paul isn't comparing the Spirit to a sword, like he compares faith to a shield. Instead, he says the word of God is like a sword, and the Holy Spirit helps make the sword useful. When the devil attacks, the believers will defend themselves using God's Word, by reading it, quoting it, and speaking it.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What words or phrases do you use in your language to describe the way that a person continues to trust God, continues to act rightly, and continues to believe in God's truth? How can you compare or connect it with the way a soldier carries or uses armor? How might it be hard to compare the two? Discuss the way you want to translate the comparison between the armor and the characteristics. Pause this audio here.

Finally, while they do all of this, the believers must also pray and depend on God. The Holy Spirit guides and shows them how to pray. Since they are in a constant battle, they must pay attention and always be ready to pray. Paul emphasizes the need to pray constantly, telling believers to pray at all times, with all kinds of prayers and requests, then says they must continually pray for all God's people. Since this is a battle they fight alongside other believers, they should support and care for each other by praying.

As a fellow believer, Paul asks them to pray that God will give him the words to say so that he will speak without fear and explain the truth in the good news. This news was like a mystery until God revealed it to the believers. Since he has this truth, Paul says he is an ambassador, a person who speaks on behalf of his ruler, who is Christ. He says he is still an ambassador even while in chains. When he says "in chains" he means in prison. Even in prison, he must continue to declare the good news without being afraid.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, what words or phrases do you use for a person who represents someone or speaks on behalf of another? How do they do this? How do they know what to say or do? 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 to represent Paul, the believers, the Lord Jesus, God, the devil, the evil spirits, and the Holy Spirit.

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 believers. Paul tells the believers to go to the Lord Jesus to get strength. Then show how the devil and his evil spirits plan ways to attack the believers. Show God giving believers armor that they must take and put on. Then show how the devil and his army try to attack the believers like enemy soldiers attack in a battle. But the believers are wearing God's armor, so they can stand and not run away when the devil attacks. Paul reminds believers that they fight not against people, but against all kinds of spiritual forces. These spirits come from the spiritual world to rule in this world, which is evil and dark like night. So again, Paul tells the believers to put on all of the armor from God. As Paul lists out the armor, show the pieces on the believers. They should tie a belt of truth around their waist, put the breastplate of righteousness on their chest and put the shoes of peace on their feet. They should also pick up the shield of faith with one hand, put on the helmet of salvation on their head, and pick up the sword of the Spirit with the other hand. Paul says as they do this, they must pray. Show the believers praying in all situations for each other, staying alert and not giving up. Then show Paul in prison and the believers praying for him also. You can show God telling Paul what to say about the good news while he is in prison.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 6:10–20 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
- The believers who are listening to these words
- The Lord Jesus
- God
- The devil, who is the evil one
- The rulers, authorities, powers, and spiritual forces of evil
- 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, "My finishing words are these: Get strength from the Lord Jesus; let him make you strong with his mighty power. Like a soldier puts on his armor to fight, put on the armor God gives you so you can protect yourself against the devil's evil plans. You need this armor because we are not fighting against human beings. No, we are fighting against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in the days in which we live, which are like night. And we fight against the evil spirits who come from the heavenly places."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the devil, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "Since God is my enemy, I don't want people to follow him. I am going to try to stop the believers from telling others how to be in a good relationship with God," or "I will send all of my evil spirits against the believers, because I know God loves his people and it will make him sad to see them hurt. Unfortunately, I also know that Christ will completely destroy me and I am afraid," or "I know the believers will be able to resist me when they wear the armor God gives them, so I will try to trick them and tell them that they don't need God's armor, and that they can be strong on their own. Then I can hurt them."

Ask the person playing Jesus, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I already defeated the devil when I beat him on the cross. I am strong and powerful and I want the believers to use my strength because then they can resist the devil," or "Because I care about all people, it is important for the believers not to hate or try to harm unbelievers. I want those people to stop listening to the devil's schemes and to become believers as well."

Paul says, "This is why you must put on the protection, like armor, which God has provided for you. Then, any time that you have to fight against evil in these evil days, you will not run away. You will stand strong. After fighting each battle to the end, you will still be standing, ready for the next battle."

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 understand that it is important that they use the protection God gives them. This is not a calm peaceful time, but a battlefield where they can be hurt!" or "It can be overwhelming to know that we will be in many battles, but it is even more encouraging to know that God gives us what we need to resist the devil. No matter what happens, we know he has already saved us and that the devil will lose," or "I hope the believers understand that they must put on and use the armor God gives them, or they will be like a soldier in a dangerous battle who left his armor at home."

Paul says, "So be ready by preparing yourself. Take truth as if it were the belt you put on, and righteousness as if it were the breastplate that protects you. Your readiness to announce the Good News of Peace will be like the shoes that you wear. In addition to these, carry on your arm the shield, which is your faith, the confidence and trust which you have towards God. He will protect you when the devil attacks you, just like a shield protects a soldier from burning arrows. Accept the salvation that God gives; it will protect you like a helmet. Receive from the Holy Spirit the word of God, which will be like a sword."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "It is amazing how God has given us such good protection like armor to protect us! Like a soldier who wears armor, we will be ready to face any kind of attack from the devil," or "When I see Roman soldiers in their armor, I will think of Paul's words and remember that I must continue to wear God's armor," or "This is a lot of new attitudes and behavior that I will need to learn. I am glad that God is giving me this armor and helping me wear it."

Paul says, "Pray as you do all this with the Spirit helping and leading you. Pray in every situation with all kinds of requests and prayers. Stay alert and don't give up. Whenever you pray, pray for all God's people."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Holy Spirit, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I know when people are overwhelmed they cannot think of the words to say. Other times they are busy and don't remember to pray. I will remind them and help them pray, because I want to help them and I know how much they need help," or "I want to help the believers to pray because God comforts them and enjoys speaking with them. I too feel that joy," or "I don't want the believers to be afraid. Even amid all these battles, I will be with the believers, reminding them of the comfort in the scriptures and the resources God gives them."

Paul says, "Also pray that God will tell me what to say when I begin to speak. Then I can speak fearlessly as I explain the truth God has revealed to us in the good news. I am God's representative and he told me to proclaim the good news even while I am in prison. Pray that I will speak without fear, as I should."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "Sometimes I speak to rulers and important people. I don't want to be nervous when I speak and mess up my words when I talk about the good news!" or "I know God's words are better than any words I could use, so I want him to give me the words to speak. When I speak his words, people understand the truth God has revealed to us!" or "Even though I am in prison, I am not discouraged. I know this is the place God wants me to share his good news."

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "Other people may forget or think unkindly about people in prison, but I care for all people, including prisoners. Because I want all people to be in a right relationship with me, I have called Paul to explain the good news about me to the other people in prison," or "I don't want Paul to be overwhelmed by everything he must say, so I will give him the words to speak. My words have the power to change people," or "I want my people to pray for each other, which helps them remember and love each other more. I rejoice when my people care for each other and help encourage one another."

*Filling the Gaps**Filling the Gaps*

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 6:10–20 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 get strength from the **Lord**. A lord is a master over other people, who has full authority. Lord here probably means 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.

The believers must put on the **armor** that God gives to them. Armor in this context is the equipment and weapons worn and carried by a soldier as he went into battle. Paul was probably describing the armor that Roman soldiers wore.

Stop here and look at a picture of a Roman soldier with all his armor if needed. Pause this audio here.

The believers need this armor to fight against the **devil's** schemes, or evil plans. The devil, also called Satan, is the leader of all evil spirits. Paul also calls him "the evil one" later in this section of his letter. He tries to make people turn away from God by deceiving them. The devil is powerful and dangerous and he is always looking for ways that he can work against God and against God's people. Even though God still allows the devil to use his power for now, when Jesus comes back, Jesus will defeat the devil forever. God will punish the devil and all the evil spirits, and they will never be able to work against God and his people again. For more information on devil, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for devil as you used in previous passages.

The believers' struggle, or fight, is not against flesh and blood, which is another way of saying human beings. Instead, they fight against the **rulers, authorities, the powers** of the dark world, and the **spiritual forces of evil** in the heavenly places. These are all **spirits** or demons who are rebelling against God. The leader of these spirits is the devil. Because God created everything that exists, God also created these spirits. God created them good, as angels, to do his work. But some angels rebelled against God, and became evil spirits. These evil spirits try to destroy and deceive people. Some other names for these spirits are demonic powers, world rulers of darkness, fate, and false gods.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **rulers, authorities, powers, and spiritual forces of evil**. Look up demon and spirit, or supernatural being, 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.

Evil refers to anything that comes against God. It is the opposite of good; evil behavior is a wrong thing to do, or a bad thing. For more information on evil, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for evil as you used in previous passages.

These evil spirits come from the **heavenly places**, or **heavenly realms**. The word **heaven** sometimes means the visible sky, which is where people believe the spirits live. At the time Paul wrote this letter, people believed that there were many layers or levels to heaven and God lived in the highest layer. In this section of the letter, the heavenly realms do not mean the highest heaven where God is, as God did not send these evil spirits from his heaven. For more information on heavenly places, refer to heaven in the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for heavenly places as you used in previous passages.

Believers should put on righteousness like a **breastplate**. People used tough leather or metal to make the breastplate, a hard covering for the chest and sometimes the back to protect against an enemy's attack.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **breastplate**. Look at the picture of the Roman soldier's breastplate again as needed. 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.

Righteousness is behaving in the right way. For more information on righteousness, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for righteousness as you used in previous passages.

Like shoes, believers should put on the peace that comes from the **gospel** so that they will be fully prepared. Gospel is a translation of a Greek word that literally means "good news." The good news in the Bible is that God

has made a way to save people. When Paul is preaching the "mystery of the gospel," he is telling the people the good news that they can be saved if they trust in Jesus. This truth is difficult to understand, like a mystery, but God has revealed it to believers. For more information on gospel, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for gospel as you used in previous passages.

This word for **peace** means both an absence of conflict and fullness, or completeness, of life. Peace does not just mean no war or conflict. Peace means people live together in unity and love for one another. The Holy Spirit gives peace to the believers who know the good news about God. For more information on peace, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for peace as you used in previous passages.

In addition, believers should have **faith** in God, which will be like a shield to protect them. Faith is to rely on someone, to trust and believe that what that person says is true. The specific faith that Paul is talking about is when someone believes in Jesus. They trust that God will fulfill all his promises, even when it seems 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.

A Roman **shield** was a large wooden rectangle 1.2 meters high, covered with leather on the outside. Before a battle, the soldiers wet the leather covering with water. Then the shields will protect them from fire.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **shield**. Look at the picture of the Roman soldier's shield again as needed. 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 shield will block fiery **arrows**. Arrows are wooden projectiles that people shoot from bows. In Paul's time, soldiers sometimes dipped the tips of arrows in something flammable like tar. During a battle, they would sometimes set the arrows on fire before shooting them.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **arrow**. Look at the picture of the bow and arrows again as needed. 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.

Believers should accept **salvation**, carrying it with them like a helmet. Salvation means saving a person from a difficult or dangerous situation. Here, Paul specifically means God's salvation. When God saves people, they no longer have to be afraid or ashamed. For more information on salvation, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for salvation as you used in previous passages.

A **helmet** is a hat that people make out of heavy leather or metal to protect the head from any weapons or attacks.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for the **helmet**. Look at the picture of a Roman soldier's helmet again as needed. 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.

Believers must also accept and carry with them the **word of God**, which is like a sword that the Spirit gives. The word of God means everything that God tells people. When people in the New Testament talk about the word of God, they usually mean the Good News that Jesus has come into the world. People can know what God tells them through the Scriptures, which is the Bible. Therefore, people also call the Scriptures the word of God.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **word of God**. Look up Word 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 **Spirit** is the **Holy Spirit**, the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit helps the believer understand the word of God. When people pray in the Spirit, it means that he leads and helps the believers to pray. For more information on Spirit, refer to Holy Spirit in the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Spirit, or Holy Spirit, as you used in previous passages.

The believers must **pray** with all prayers and requests. Praying is communicating with God. When people pray, they praise God, thank him, ask him for help, tell him about the wrong things they have done, ask him to help other people, or just cry to him because they feel so sad. In the Bible, all these things are part of praying. For

more information on prayer, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for pray and prayer as you used in previous passages.

The believers should pray for the **saints**, or all God's people. These are people who belong to God because they believe in Jesus. For more information on saints, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for saints as you used in previous passages.

Paul needs prayer as he explains the gospel as an **ambassador**. An ambassador is a person who represents or speaks for a ruler. Paul is an ambassador for God. God has chosen Paul to speak the words that God gives him to speak.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **ambassador**. 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.

Ephesians 6:10–20

Audio Content

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Ephesians 6:21–24

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Ephesians 6:21–24 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 6:21–24 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 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 Ephesians 6:21–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Paul has just given his final encouragement and summary: to put on the armor God gives and continue to pray. Now he finishes his letter by explaining who he is sending the letter with, and why he chose this man. Then he concludes with his blessing for the believers.

In that time, it was common for travelers to carry letters and other news. Paul is sending this letter with a man named Tychicus to take to the Ephesian believers. Since these believers probably wouldn't know this man, Paul gives a brief introduction. Paul says that Tychicus is a dear fellow believer, like a brother. Since God is the Father of all believers, all believers are like brothers and sisters. Therefore, Paul often uses the word for brother when referring to a fellow believer.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you talk about a fellow believer or close friend in your culture? In what kind of situations would you refer to someone not related to you as a family member? What other words would you use to describe someone you love like a family member? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that Tychicus serves the Lord faithfully. So, Tychicus will be a reliable person to carry this letter and share all the news about Paul. When Paul wrote this letter, Tychicus was with him in Rome. Paul says that he is sending Tychicus specifically to let the believers know how Paul and the people with him are doing. Tychicus

can describe Paul's living conditions and his personal health as well as the work that the believers are doing. Then the believers will be encouraged and will no longer worry about Paul. Tychicus can also encourage them to follow the good behaviors and attitudes mentioned in the letter.

Stop here and look at a map of Rome and Ephesus as a group. Pause this audio here.

Paul finishes with a blessing or a prayer for the believers. Just as he began the letter, he also closes with a prayer that God would give the believers peace and grace. Instead of saying "to you," he says "Peace to the brothers," maybe because the letter would be passed around to believers in other cities. Again, he uses the word for brother to mean fellow believers, both men and women.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss how you bless or wish good things for each other in your culture. When someone leaves, or if you are sending a message to someone far away, how do you share your hopes or prayers of good things for them? What kind of things do you say you want for them? What kind of people are more likely to give these blessings or prayers? Pause this audio here.

Paul asks that both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ would help the believers love each other and continue to trust God together. He also asks that God will show his grace to everyone who loves our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says "without ending" which could either mean that Paul asks for unending grace or life, or that this grace is for people who persistently love Jesus without stopping.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 6:21–24 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 2 parts.

In the first part: Paul explains that he is sending Tychicus to bring this letter, news about Paul, and encouragement to the believers.

In the second part: Paul ends the letter by praying that God and Jesus will give the believers peace, love, faith, and grace.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- The person reading this letter aloud, probably Tychicus
- God the Father
- The Lord Jesus Christ

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first part of this passage, Paul introduces Tychicus and explains why Paul is sending him. Tychicus is a believer and is dear to Paul like a brother. Tychicus serves the Lord faithfully, so he will be a reliable person to bring this letter. Remember, Paul has mentioned several times that he is in prison. Since Tychicus is reliable, he will also truthfully describe how and what Paul is doing and answer any questions or worries that the believers might have about Paul. Paul says that this is exactly why he sends Tychicus: both to share news about Paul and his fellow believers and to encourage the believers.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Imagine if you were sending a letter or a message to a group of people you care about. Discuss how you would end the letter. What kind of things would you include? What kind of formal or ceremonial words or phrases do people in your culture use? Pause this audio here.

In the second part of this passage, Paul ends the letter with a blessing, or good things he prays for the believers. Paul often ends his letters this way. He asks that both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will give peace to the believers. He also prays that God will help the believers to love each other and continue to believe in Christ. Finally, he prays that God will show his grace to the believers who love our Lord Jesus Christ without ending.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: When you bless or wish good things for each other, who do you ask to give these blessings? How do you explain this? 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 to represent Paul, the believers, Tychicus, God the Father, and the Lord Jesus.

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 believers as he introduces Tychicus. Show Tychicus going from Paul to the believers with the letter. Show how he shares the letter, news about Paul, and encouragement with the believers in Ephesus. Then Paul prays that God and Jesus will give the believers good things. Show God and Jesus giving the believers attitudes of peace, love, and faith. Paul also prays that God will show kindness to the people who love Jesus. Show God giving kindness to the people. These are the believers, and the believers show how they love Jesus.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 6:21–24 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
- The believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- The person reading this letter aloud, probably Tychicus
- God the Father
- 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, "Tychicus is a dear fellow believer and the Lord's faithful servant. He will tell you how I am, and what I am doing. This is why I am asking him to come to you, so that you will know how I and the fellow believers with me are doing. He will also be able to encourage you."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Tychicus, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "Because I am so thankful for what the Lord has done for me, I want to serve him in any way I can. I'm glad to be taking this letter to the believers in Ephesus," or "Since I care about Paul, I have asked him how he is and have helped him, so I know how he is doing," or "Like Paul, these believers in Ephesus are like my family because they belong to God, so I want to encourage and help them."

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "Since I am in prison, I know many people worry about me and my safety. I don't want them to worry, so I will send Tychicus to let them know the many good ways that God is helping me," or "I am sad to say goodbye to Tychicus, since he is dear to me, but I am glad that the believers in Ephesus will be able to meet him. I know they will encourage each other as believers should," or "I am so thankful to the Lord that there are many other believers who are supporting me, helping me, and even carrying letters for me while I am in prison."

Then Paul says, "May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give peace to all the believers. I also pray God will help all the believers to continue to love each other and believe in Christ. I pray that God will show his grace to all the believers who love the Lord Jesus Christ without stopping."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "Since I have adopted the believers as my children, I love them all. As their father, I am pleased when they love and help each other, encouraging each other with their words and prayers," or "I know what the believers in Ephesus need, so I have asked Paul to encourage them. I also know what Paul needs so I have brought other believers to help him. I do this because I love to give good things to my people, like peace and good community."

Ask the person playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "We have been worried about Paul and want to know what is happening to him. We care for him, so we don't want him to be in pain or distress," or "We look forward to hearing from Tychicus about all the good things that the Lord is doing through his people in Rome. It is encouraging to hear how God is saving people, even in a city with many false gods," or "We are comforted by the care Paul has shown for us: writing this letter, praying good things for us, and sending Tychicus to encourage us. We're so thankful God has made us into a family that cares for each other!"

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Ephesians 6:21–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

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

Paul says that Tychicus is a faithful **servant** in the Lord. A servant is a person who works for and serves another person. Paul called himself a servant of the gospel earlier in this letter. This is not the same word that Paul used earlier for a slave, or a worker who is not free. Paul is saying that Tychicus faithfully or reliably does work for the Lord. For more information on servant, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for servant as you used in previous passages.

A **lord** is a master over other people, who has full authority, so the Israelites used this word for God, because he has authority over the whole world. 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 also says that Tychicus is a dear **brother**. 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.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **brother**, or whether you will use the words "fellow believer." Look up believer 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 God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ to give the believers **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.

Christ 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.

Paul also asks God to help the believers to continue in love and **faith**. Faith is to rely on someone, to trust and believe that what that person says is true. The specific faith that Paul is talking about is when someone believes in Jesus. For more information on faith, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for faith as you used in previous passages.

Paul finishes by asking that God will show his **grace** to everyone who loves Jesus. 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 good things, attitudes, and abilities that God gives to believers. 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.

Ephesians 6:21–24

Audio Content

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