

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

## *Colossians: Living the Faith Faithfully*

### Lesson 1

A People Reconciled by Christ .....3  
*Colossians 1:15-23*

### Lesson 2

A People Who Belong to God .....8  
*Colossians 2:8-23*

### Lesson 3

A People Who Clothe Themselves in Christ .....13  
*Colossians 3:1-17*

### Lesson 4

A People Called to More .....18  
*Colossians 4:1-6*

# WHAT'S IN YOUR TEACHING GUIDE

This Teaching Guide has three purposes:

- to give the teacher tools for focusing on the content of the session in the Study Guide.
- to give the teacher additional Bible background information.
- to give the teacher variety and choice in preparation.

The Teaching Guide includes two major components: Teacher Helps and Teacher Options.

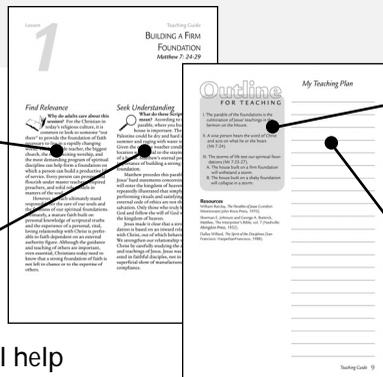
## Teacher Helps

### Find Relevance

helps you zero in on why each session is important for the adults you teach.

### Seek Understanding

presents helpful Bible Background informations and insights that will help you better understand the Scripture.

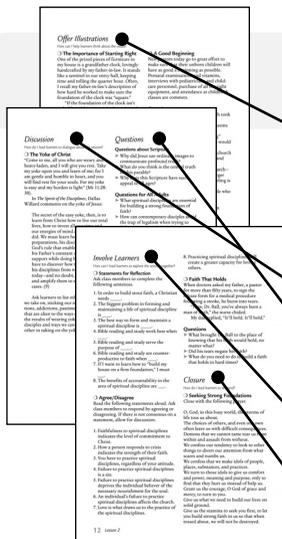


### Teaching Outline

provides you with an outline of the main themes in the Study Guide.

**My Teaching Plan** is a convenient place for you to make notes for teaching the session.

## Teacher Options



**Offer Illustrations** presents material that will help you paint a picture of the session. This section often presents items from church history, current events, or interesting anecdotes that help introduce the session.

**Discussion** provides teaching activities that will help learners discuss the Scripture text.

**Questions** presents multiple collections of questions for various kinds of adults.

**Involve Learners** helps learners become actively involved with the Scripture text for a particular session.

**Closure** gives you a means for wrapping up the session.

### You Can Choose!

There is more material in each session than you can use, so choose the options from each section to tailor the session to the needs of your group.

### Prepare Before the Session

Read the session for today in the Study Guide. Then read the options in this Teaching Guide, placing checkmarks beside the activities you plan to include. After you have decided which options to use, gather the appropriate materials.

# A PEOPLE RECONCILED BY CHRIST

*Colossians 1:15-23*

## *Find Relevance*



**Why do adults care about this session?** This letter of Paul's was written to a young group of Christians at the church at Colossae. Paul was sharing with them what he believed to be most important about the Christian faith. He was trying to clarify what truly mattered—what was ultimately important. In our modern society, where we are bombarded with multiple responsibilities and constant demands, we need to know what grounds us—what puts us in touch with our soul. Unfortunately, television's idea of getting in touch with our spiritual side is to buy the latest sports utility vehicle. Modern society and technology offer the possibility for such self-sufficiency that we can easily be tempted to wonder if faith really matters. Paul reminds us that it does! And it has since the beginning of creation. As recorded in his letter, Paul believes the church is our creative expression in community of just how much faith matters. Paul reminds us that life is about more than routine and details. Life, if we are to live it fully, is about responding faithfully to God.

## *Seek Understanding*



**What do these Scriptures mean?** The first verses of today's Scripture are known as a hymn of the early church. They proclaim the presence of God in creation, acknowledging Christ as head of the church, and offer thanksgiving for our own relationship with God made possible through Christ. Paul used words familiar to the Colossians to reinforce what it means to move from estrangement from God to redemption through Christ. Because we know that Christ lived on earth as we do, we know more clearly what God is like. God came to us in a way we could understand, to bridge the gap between us. Each Sunday when we gather to worship, like the Colossians, we sing hymns that express what we know to be true about God, remembering and proclaiming our beliefs. With the Spirit of God fully available to us, we are called to recognize that Christ redeems us and calls us to living faithfully in the world.



## Offer Illustrations

How can I help learners think about the issues?

### ○ Redemption

In the film *The Shawshank Redemption*, Tim Robbins plays Andy Dufresne, a city banker wrongfully convicted of murdering his wife and her lover. Receiving a double life sentence for his crime, he is incarcerated at Shawshank prison in 1947. He survives by facing head on the suffering of prison. Behind prison bars, he meets “Red,” forming an unlikely friendship with him that crosses the usual boundaries of race, age, and social status. Red finds hope himself in befriending a man who sees life within and beyond the suffering of imprisonment. Even in captivity, these men seize the opportunity for freedom.

### Questions

- What is the relationship between redemption and hope? between redemption and freedom? between redemption and friendship?
- Does redemption happen all at once or over time?

### ○ Deep-rooted Faith

Elizabeth Lesser, cofounder of the renowned Omega Institute, the nation’s largest holistic education and retreat center, noticed a disturbing trend among the learning opportunities of the center. She notes, “Some of the kids in the holistic candy shop were stuffing themselves with so much variety that they were never nourished by the depth of any one tradition” (33). She began to understand that “spreading wide must always be grounded by going deep.... Otherwise learning does not take root and the students floats, always hungry, grasping at whatever sounds new and promising.” (Ibid.) Spiritual depth comes from being rooted in faith tradition.

### Questions

- What does it mean to be grounded in your faith?
- Why might choosing one particular religious tradition be important?

### ○ From Alienation to Reconciliation

Tom and Jean decided to separate after being together for three years. Counseling had helped them recognize that they still loved each other but that they had grown in different ways. Their old relationship no longer suited them. They wanted to maintain the friendship but did not know how to let go of their past way of relating. They decided on a ritual. They dug a hole and placed some artifacts of their relationship in it—a few gifts, a letter. During the week, Tom had written a poem and Jean had made a picture, symbolizing the significance of their friendship. They shared these creations with each other and discovered they had each included what they had hoped the relationship would become. Together, they put the drawing and poem into the hole and set them on fire. They acknowledged these symbols of their past and let their old ways of relating pass away. Then, when the fire was out, they covered it with dirt and planted flowers over the remains of their old relationship. As they watered the flowers, they said a prayer that what had died could find life in a new and better form. (Beck and Metrick in Brussat, 439)

### Questions

- When have you felt alienated from another person whom you care about, and how did reconciliation occur?
- Can reconciliation occur apart from a relationship or community?
- When you have felt alienated from God, how were you reconciled? Did reconciliation require putting aside some old habits?
- What ritual might improve your relationship to God?

## Discussion

How do I lead learners to dialogue about the session?

### ○ Images of God

Concerned about the distinction the early Christians wanted to make between earthly and spiritual realms, Paul emphasized that God is in all and over all creation. This tendency surfaces even today. Until recently, Western thought tended to separate body, mind, and spirit. Paul described both the majesty and omnipresence of God while reminding the Colossians that through Christ God was among us on earth.

In the worship of our churches we sing a variety of images of God. We sing of God as distant and majestic as well as personal and within us. At different times in our lives, we may find ourselves attracted to one image of God over the other because we need to relate to God in different ways.

Before the session, obtain a copy of the song “From a Distance,” recorded by Bette Midler on the album *Some People’s Lives*. In addition, find a recording of one of the following hymns, “When We Walk with the Lord” or “I Come to the Garden Alone.” You will also need the appropriate audio equipment to play the recordings for your group. Alternatively, you might ask someone to play the hymns on the piano, or perhaps your group could sing the hymns together.

Invite discussion of the different images of God portrayed in the musical selections.

### Questions

- What made it hard for the Colossians to embrace God as both fully divine and fully human?
- Which image of God do you prefer at this time in your life?

## Questions

### Questions about Scripture

- What were Paul’s concerns and hopes for the Colossian church?
- What are the essential tenets of faith that Paul names?
- Why doesn’t Paul just begin by telling the Colossians what he wants them to do?

### Questions for All Adults

- When have you felt alienated from God, and how did you experience reconciliation?
- What impact does claiming your faith daily have on your life?
- How can we embrace Paul’s call to continue steadfastly in our faith when we know we face times when even hoping is hard?

### Questions for Mature Adults

- What past experiences with God have helped shape your faith?
- How has your faith grown and matured over the years?
- What has been the role of forgiveness in living faithfully?

### Questions for Young Adults

- Paul speaks about becoming a servant to our faith. How does your faith influence your choices about family and career?
- How do you live out your servanthood to God?
- How do you let others know of your faith in Christ?

### Questions for Adults with Children

- How do you think a child learns what it means to be alienated from God?
- How are you modeling servanthood for your children?
- What tenets of faith do you believe are most important for your child to embrace?

## *Involve Learners*

How can I lead learners to explore the session together?

### ○ A Letter of Faith

Invite each person to imagine a youth whom they care about. Imagine further that this young person is openly pondering the meaning of faith and its importance in their lives. The young person is confused about why being a follower of Christ is important in their relationship with God.

Provide learners with a piece of stationery and ask them to write a letter to that youth, offering what they believe to be the essentials of faith. Ask your learners to share their letters, and then compile a master list on the blackboard of all the essential components listed by your group. Ask your group to ponder if there are aspects of their faith that are important to them but not essential.

### ○ A Hymn of Faith

Hand out copies of your church hymnal to your learners. Ask individuals to find the hymn that best describes and proclaims the basic tenets of their faith. Ask, "What hymn helps you most fully sing your theology?" Emphasize that you are not asking them to pick their favorite hymn tune, but the hymn that best conveys the essential elements of their faith. Involve learners in discussion about the basics of their faith and the importance of the hymns they choose in their personal faith journey.

### Question

- Why do you think Paul chose to include the words of a hymn in his proclamation to the Colossian church?

### ○ Changes of Heart

Ask your learners to form two groups, giving each group paper and pencil. Ask one group to list biblical characters who once alienated themselves from their family, friends, or God and then experienced a transformation and reconciliation.

Ask the second group to list modern illustrations of the same idea. Their list could include public figures, movie characters, or characters from a favorite novel.

After several minutes, reconvene the large group and ask a representative from each small group to read their list. Then lead a discussion about the similarities between the two lists. Encourage reflection on what leads to the reconciliation.

### Questions

- What happens within a person to allow for a change of heart?
- What circumstances encourage transformation?

## *Closure*

How do I lead learners to respond?

### ○ Deep Roots

Foundations are important. Even the trees of God's creation will stand only with a firm foundation of roots to hold them securely. Deepening the foundations of our faith strengthens our relationship with God and allows us to be more attentive to our souls. Ask learners to reflect on their foundations. Are they formed in such a way as to allow for the struggles and questions with which life invariably confronts us? Remember that a tree continually puts down new roots to support new growth. Ask your learners to consider what new growth they might need to support. Then close in prayer, asking God for wisdom and insight.

# 2

## A PEOPLE WHO BELONG TO GOD

*Colossians 2:8-23*

### *Find Relevance*



**Why do adults care about this session?** How we live out our faith and communicate it with others is a central issue for Christians. In our churches and denominations, we create rules and procedures to help us relate to our world and to live together ethically, responsibly, and faithfully in community. However, in a society filled with large churches and massive denominational structures, rules can sometimes be honored before the heart is ever engaged. Our relationship with God is possible because Christ walked on earth in human form to teach us how to love. Christ never honored a ritual simply for sake of the ritual. Certainly, rituals can be used in significant ways to undergird our beliefs and sustain our faith, but rituals also can involve meaningless requirements. We should continually evaluate our traditions and rituals, seeking the Spirit of God to fill them with meaning.

### *Seek Understanding*



**What do these Scriptures mean?** Clearly, Paul believed that faith in Christ had far more to do with the movement of the Spirit of God than with the outward laws and structures of religion. Paul encouraged the Colossians to be confident in and faithful to the gospel of Christ; unswayed by empty teachings that gave an outward look of piety but required no inner change of the heart. To support these early Christians in his teachings, Paul suggests two things: (1) Remember your transformation at baptism and your new life in Christ. (2) The substance of faith is Christ, *not* the particular rituals in which we engage. While pointing to baptism, one of the most accepted rituals of faith, he warns about rituals devoid of meaning. Every faith has accepted practices and rituals, rules and procedures. Paul knows all too well that not all of them result in a loving response toward one's neighbor. Even today, we are called to be continually aware of how our traditions influence our expressions of faith and how our faith shapes the creation of traditions.



## Offer Illustrations

How can I help learners think about the issues?

### ○ Spiritual Exercises

Throughout the ages, many people have written treatises on rules for daily living. One such famous work is *Spiritual Exercises* by Saint Ignatius, originally published in 1548. Ignatius writes that the phrase “spiritual exercises” takes in all the formal ways we have of making contact with God, such as meditation, contemplation, vocal prayer, devotions, examination of conscience, and so on.

Today, we are familiar with a variety of *physical* exercises, such as walking, jogging, and playing sports. These physical exercises are good for toning muscles, improving circulation, and, in general, the good health of the body. In the same manner, “spiritual exercises are good for increasing openness to the movement of the Spirit...and supporting us in the effort to respond ever more faithfully to the love of God” (Fleming, 15).

### Questions

- How are you helped or hindered by thinking of attention to your faith as exercise?
- What faith practices do you find most meaningful?

### ○ To Help or Not to Help

One day a gentleman called the church office to request financial assistance from the church. He indicated that he had visited the church on several occasions and needed assistance with his rent. He had been successful at finding a job and now had a place to live but needed help with rent until he could receive his first paycheck. The deacons of the church had a discretionary fund established to assist church members experiencing financial hardship. The caller, however, was not a member and was unable to receive help from this fund.

### Questions

- When does a rule help with the mission of the church? When does it hinder?
- How might the church have responded to this caller in a way that illustrated an appreciation for tradition but also met the current need?

### ○ The Deeper Meaning

In a recent magazine article, Thomas Moore, popular author on matters of the soul, writes:

I've never taken pleasure in rules, either in enforcing them or keeping them. Yet I spent thirteen years of my precious youth in a monastic order where rules were the order of the day.... For some people, rules seem to be the meaning of life.... The deep spiritual rule shows how to live with others and how to organize a day so that considerable attention will be given to the eternal concerns and not just the temporal ones. The word “rule” comes from the Latin *regula*, as in regulations, and means “straight.” A monastic rule is like a straightedge, a ruler. You can use it to keep life from getting too wobbly and improvisatory. It's a handy tool and not a threatening sword hanging over your head. Of course, it's a short step from a handy rule to a tough law, and it's easy to forget the deeper meaning of a rule. (6)

### Questions

- In what spiritual practices do you regularly participate?
- When have you become aware that a particular ritual of your faith was empty and meaningless? How did you respond?

## Discussion

How do I lead learners to dialogue about the session?

### ○ Formulas for Christian Living

One can look through any Christian bookstore today and find multitudes of books that offer a latest formula for how to live a Christian life. “How to” books are often bestsellers.

In *The Prayer of Jabez*, author Bruce Wilkinson offers instructions for praying the prayer of Jabez (1 Chronicles 4:9-10) every morning, marking it off on your calendar, in order to receive God’s abundant blessings (86).

### Questions

- How do you feel about this approach to spiritual discipline?
- What rituals do you practice in your own faith development?
- How do you know when a spiritual exercise has become simply a habit and when it is genuinely opening your spirit to the Spirit of God?

## Questions

### Questions about Scripture

- Paul pleads with his followers not to allow rituals to “become a source of judgment.” What implication does Paul’s admonition have for us?
- What were the false teachers tempting the Colossians to believe?
- When do rules and regulations become only surface remedies to spiritual problems?

### Questions for All Adults

- When have rules or rituals hindered your spiritual growth?
- What rituals of your church might need reorientation?

### Questions for Mature Adults

- When has a long-standing ritual in your church come into question? How did you respond?
- How can you personally let go of a faith practice that has served you well but no longer meets the needs of the congregation?
- What can you say to a young person in your congregation about the meaning of a time-honored tradition in your church that he or she does not value?

### Questions for Young Adults

- What traditions of the church have helped you embrace your faith and experience spiritual growth?
- Who would you feel comfortable talking to about the meaning of a church ritual that you do not understand?
- Do you think you should challenge rituals of the church that are not meaningful for your generation? Why or why not?

### Questions for Adults with Children

- A well-known phrase used with children is “Because I said so!” How can we help children understand the deeper meaning of rules and traditions?
- In what way can you invite your child to help establish a meaningful tradition for your family?
- How will you help your child understand the important rituals of the church?

## Involve Learners

How can I lead learners to explore the session together?

### ○ Tradition!

Tradition can be a powerful influence on even our daily choices. In the film version of the popular stage musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, Tevye the milkman is a Jewish peasant in pre-Revolutionary Russia. The story unfolds with images of the problems he faces with the daily struggles of life, his religious traditions, and providing for his family. Arrange in advance to have a CD of the musical or a video of the film, and play for the class the selection “Tradition.” It is a classic moment in the film when Tevye walks through the village introducing the town folk and then offering his musical discourse on *traditions!* He asks, “Why do we have these traditions? It is because they help us to know who we are and what God expects of us.”

Use this song to aid discussion about how Paul sought to influence the religious traditions of his day.

### ○ Naming Our Rituals

Give each person paper and a pencil. Ask them to make two columns on their paper, one with the heading “Acknowledged Rituals,” and the other with the heading “Unspoken Rituals.” Invite your learners to think of rules and rituals that are a part your church life. Ask them to give special attention to the headings on their page, listing both acknowledged rituals as well as those that remain unspoken but nevertheless communicate the expectations of the church.

Involve learners in discussion about the meanings behind these rituals. Explore how these rituals strengthen the experience of community within the congregation and how they can be used to acknowledge and deepen faith in God and servanthood to others.

### ○ A Stroll Down Memory Lane

Ask your class to form groups of three to four people. Invite learners to share the story of their baptism with their small group. Ask them to describe the events leading up to their baptism—the place, the water, the words that were spoken, and any significant people who participated. Prompt reflection on their stories with these questions: What do you remember about your decision to be baptized? What changed for you? How do you continually remember your baptism? After reconvening class members into a large group, ask what we gain from looking back at our faith history and what importance such reflection has in our daily lives.

## Closure

How do I lead learners to respond?

### ○ Take My Life

Remind learners that Paul encouraged us not to allow the rituals of our faith to become meaningless. Rather, he invites us to let the power and symbolism of our rules and rituals strengthen our faith. Invite learners to participate in a closing ritual. Obtain small stones, enough for each person to have one, and a bowl of water. Give each person a stone, and while they are holding it, ask them to think of one new way they would like to open their hearts and lives to God. Then ask them one at a time to place their stone in the bowl filled with water. Ask them to think of this action as baptizing their belief toward a new way of living. The ritual can symbolize that both our beliefs and our actions make up our faith. Close the session by singing the hymn “Take My Life and Let It Be,” or recite it together as a prayer.

## A PEOPLE WHO CLOTHE THEMSELVES IN CHRIST

*Colossians 3:1-17*

### *Find Relevance*



**Why do adults care about this session?** Most of us take pride in our clothing, enjoy choosing it from hundreds of possibilities, sometimes spend too much, and respond with either alarm or satisfaction to the latest fashion trends. Using clothing as his metaphor, Paul calls us to wrap the words and actions of a compassionate Christian life around us as we would our clothing. Wearing something means holding it close to you. It also means showing everyone you pass your choices. Clothing ourselves in Christ means embracing the qualities of a Christian lifestyle. When we clothe ourselves in Christ, we are also setting an example for others to follow. Paul's metaphor, however, goes one huge step further than the clothing image prompts us to consider. Embracing the Christian lifestyle is for the purpose of relationship—of living together in community, of living in relationship to God.

### *Seeking Understanding*



**What do these Scriptures mean?** Paul continues to write to the Colossians of what new life in Christ means. Paul does not say that there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free to identify that we are all now identical members of the body of Christ. He tells us to put on the clothing of compassion and kindness and to relate to others with these qualities. He also tells us to rid ourselves of those unloving actions that tear down relationships. When we do that, the differences between us will not create a gulf of indifference too difficult to cross. Christianity destroys barriers of all kinds—cultural, ritual, educational, and economic. Embracing others in compassion will lead us together in friendship and community. God calls us to live in peace with each other, and Paul's guidance offers a means to this end. Choosing compassion, gentleness, kindness, and patience is what leads us to each other.













## Offer Illustration

How can I help learners think about the issues?

### ○ Me

As in *me first* and *gimme*, the pronoun has gotten a bad name over the years. It's other people we're told we should be thinking about... 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' we're told. Maybe before I can love my neighbor very effectively, I have to love *me*—not in the sense of a blind passion but in the sense of looking after, of wishing well, of forgiving when necessary, or being my own friend. (Buechner, 79)

These words penned by poet and author Frederick Buechner capture the challenge of our Christian faith. We must learn to care for ourselves enough to be healthy and attentive to others. And, on the flip side, we must care for others enough that we are not absorbed with ourselves. Paul gives us permission to seek care for ourselves while affirming that we do it in order to carry out a grand vision.

### Questions

- Paul requested that the Colossians pray for him. Why do you think people often have difficulty requesting prayer for themselves, even when they most need it?
- How does attention to your own needs influence your ability to care for your neighbor?

### ○ Loving Life

In *The Prophet*, Kahlil Gibran said, “When you work you fulfill a part of Earth’s furthest dream, assigned to you when that dream was born, and in keeping yourself with labor you are in truth loving life, and to love life through labor is to be intimate with life’s inmost secret” (25).

Paul encouraged us not to segment our lives into secular and religious portions, but to think of our lives as a whole. Oftentimes, however, our professional lives seem far removed from our church lives. Sadly, we can be tempted to overlook our Christian beliefs because we think no one will notice. Gibran said that work is love made visible. To work with love is “to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart” (25).

### Questions

- How do you weave your awareness of God’s presence into the decisions you make at work or in social settings?
- Do some jobs allow us to engage our spirituality while others do not? Do all jobs give us the potential to develop love and wisdom?
- Where are you called to more in your vocation?

## Discussion

How do I lead learners to dialogue about the session?

### ○ Running Errands

Moving about town to complete various errands, I became aware of how disengaged and disinterested so many people seem. We pass so many faces, often mindlessly, hardly sharing any words between us. Sometimes I don't even pass faces. I put my card in the slot at the pump to pay for gas and never speak to anyone. I'm never thanked for shopping there, and I never thank anyone for bringing gas to my street corner. I put my card in at the machine at the bank to secure the amount of cash I need. I shop at enough grocery stores that I never see the same clerk twice. The last clerk I saw did not even say hello. Although city life may reveal more of such behaviors, nonetheless, we live in a society that little by little has contributed to isolation and lack of initiative for relationships. What I must confess is that, at the grocery store, I didn't say hello to the clerk either. A favorite campfire chorus begins, "They'll know we are Christians by our love." The question is, "Will they know?"

### Questions

- What do your actions communicate to those around you about your love for life? about your love for God?
- Where in our lives is there a place for the "salty" wit to which Paul refers?
- When have you witnessed someone sharing his or her faith without tact or integrity?

## Questions

### Questions about Scripture

- In his letter to the Colossians, why do you think Paul included a message about masters and their slaves?
- According to Paul, how are we to live our Christian life?
- What does Paul say our personal devotion should include?

### Questions for All Adults

- When have you had to make a conscious decision to treat someone fairly?
- How are you at balancing your prayers of request and your prayers of thanksgiving?
- In relationships in which you have an authoritative role, how do you encourage people to live and grow to their fullest potential?

### Questions for Mature Adults

- As a society, has our ability to treat others with dignity and respect changed? Explain.
- In what ways can you continue to embrace the energy and vision that Paul felt for spreading the gospel?

### Questions for Young Adults

- In your professional life, when are you challenged to put aside Christian behavior?
- When you want to tell someone why being a Christian is important to you, what do you say?
- What opportunities for Christian service are before you to seize?

### Questions for Adults with Children

- In the Revised Standard Version, verse 4 begins with a phrase that we often say to children: "Behave yourselves." How do you receive these words coming from Paul?
- How can we help children know what it means to be gracious?

## Involve Learners

How can I lead learners to explore the session together?

### ○ After All These Years

Paul believed that we are all one family as the church is the one body of Christ. As we participate in the life and development of the church today, we follow a long line of ancestors before us. Give each learner paper and pencil. Ask class members to write a letter to the people of the church at Colossae to let them know how the church is doing today. Then lead a discussion using questions like the following.

### Questions

- What were you happy to report?
- What were you embarrassed to have to report?
- What progress has the church made? What remains the same?
- What wisdom do the Colossians offer?

### ○ Pass the Salt, Please

Give each learner a tiny packet of salt. Ask them to open the packet, place a small amount on their finger, and taste it. Have them describe the flavor of food that is salted. Write all the adjectives on the board. In contrast, have them describe the flavor of food without salt, and list these adjectives as well.

Paul encourages that our speech about our faith in Christ be “salty.” In Greek, “salty” speech often meant “witty.” It certainly referred to speech that is not dull or empty. In essence, Paul asks us not to be religious bores. Commenting on Paul’s words, William Barclay says the Christian must relay his or her message with “the charm and wit which were Jesus himself” (Barclay, 168).

Divide your group into an even number of small groups. Assign half the groups “salty” and half the groups “bland.” Ask them to role-play conversations about faith that would be considered “salty” and “bland.”

Allow time for each group to perform, and then invite discussion about Paul’s choice of the term “salty” to describe our conversation.

## Closure

How do I lead learners to respond?

### ○ Listen to Your Children

Paul reminded us that our desires for loving Christian relationships are possible with and strengthened by prayer. Paul balanced his prayers, praying for others and for himself, and he cautions that we not simply pray for release from our difficult times but for strength to persevere through them in order to fulfill our hopes and visions.

Give each person a copy of page 24 or give each learner two small squares of paper and invite them to think about how they invite God into their lives by responding to these two phrases:

And now, pray for me that God may open a door for \_\_\_\_\_.

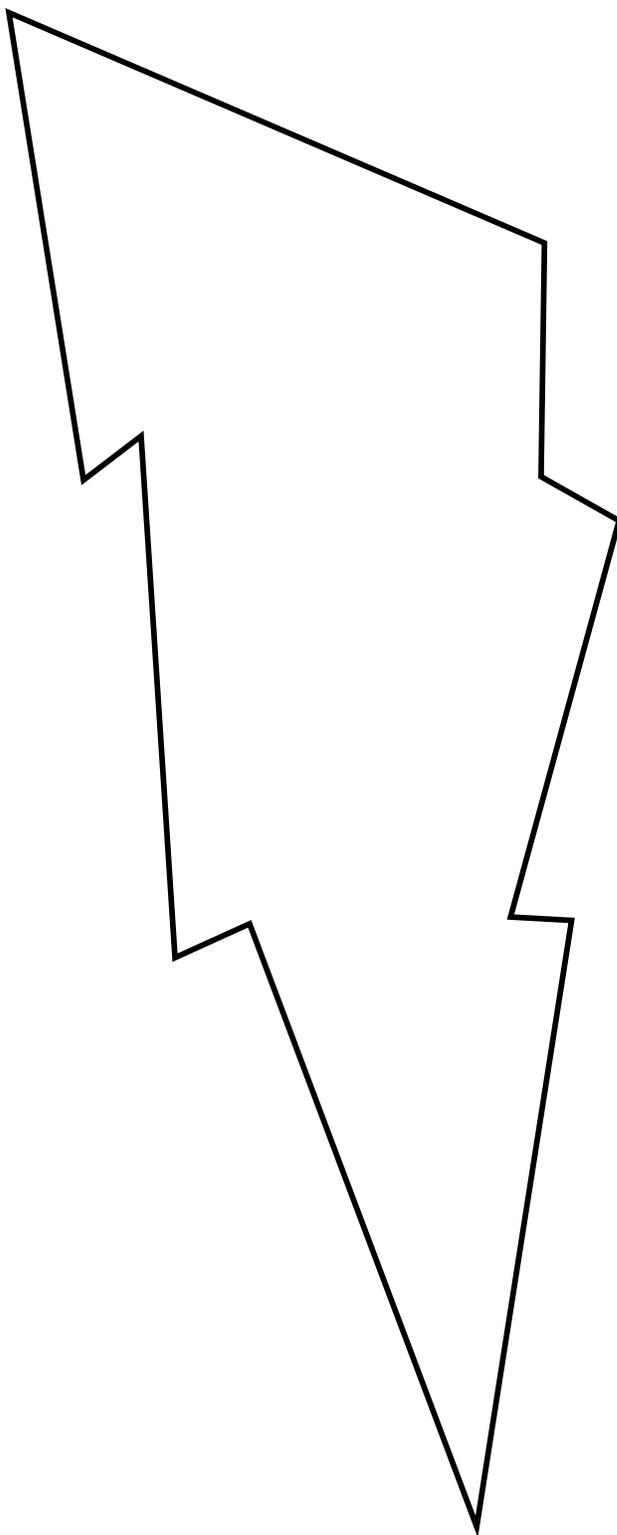
And now, I pray for \_\_\_\_\_ that God may open a door for them to \_\_\_\_\_.

Invite learners to voice their written prayers. After each spoken prayer, have them sing together the first line of the chorus “Lord, listen to your children praying.” Close with a prayer, and invite learners to sing in closing:

Lord, listen to your children praying.  
Lord, send your spirit in this place.  
Lord, listen to your children praying.  
Send us love, send us power, send us grace. (Medema)



# JUST AS YOU ARE





# LISTEN TO YOUR CHILDREN

And now, pray for me that God may open a door for \_\_\_\_\_

And now, I pray for \_\_\_\_\_ that God may open a door for them to

---

---

And now, pray for me that God may open a door for \_\_\_\_\_

And now, I pray for \_\_\_\_\_ that God may open a door for them to

---

