

LESSON 4
LIVING IN PEACE

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Helps Us Love and Forgive Others

SCRIPTURE: Colossians 1; 3

GOD'S BIG STORY: Paul reminds believers that we're called to love and forgive others and that our faith in Christ and His presence in us through the Holy Spirit help us do both.

WORD OF WONDER: The three most important things to have are faith, hope and love. But the greatest of them is love. —1 Corinthians 13:13

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: What's something you do every day that you can't do on your own?
- Curiosity Questions
- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Word of Wonder: 1 Corinthians 13:13
- Word of Wonder Activity
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: A Breath of Forgiveness



Walking in Love Elementary Spotify playlist

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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WONDER TRUTH: God Helps Us Love and Forgive Others

SCRIPTURE: Colossians 1; 3

WORD OF WONDER: 1 Corinthians 13:13

Forgiveness. Now there's a word that's easier said than done. When someone does something that hurts or offends us, we have a decision to make: to forgive or not to forgive. Why is that so hard?

The funny thing is that as we read through the Gospels, we see Jesus setting the example of love and forgiveness. Then in Colossians 3:1–2, Paul reminds us to set our hearts and minds on things that are in heaven rather than be distracted by worldly things. Yet sometimes, the things of the world can feel so big and sound so loud. Maybe it's the temptation to hold onto resentment or to pay back gossip with more gossip. But God has something better in mind.

It's important to remind ourselves that we don't live the way we used to live before beginning a relationship with Jesus. We're not that person any longer. Jesus changes us. He has forgiven us. Because of this, we can set aside unforgiveness and exchange it for love.

Take a few moments to read Paul's two lists in Colossians 3:5–14: The things to put off and the things to put on.

What do you need to put off and put on this week? Remember, God is the one who empowers you. You need only to submit your heart and mind to Him; He does the rest!

—Tom Bump

Children's Ministry Leader, Author, and Coach
Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

There were Jews who lived in Colossae, but the recipients of the letter of Colossians appear to be mostly Greek and non-Jewish Christians. Paul builds them up by contrasting their former way of life—following pagan religious standards—to their new way of life in Christ.

WHAT?

Christians in Colossae were facing mixed religious teaching (see especially 2:16–23). But in contrast to the empty promises of mysticism, God’s hidden purposes have already been revealed in and through Jesus.

WHERE?

Colossae was a small city in Phrygia. As part of the Roman Empire, its residents looked to Rome as their source of peace, wealth, and security. The letter to the Colossians paints fruitfulness and hope in heaven as far greater than these things (1:3–6).

WHEN?

There seems to have been a major earthquake in the Lycus Valley where the city of Colossae was located, perhaps around AD 60. It makes sense to think that Paul would have been writing to the city and its Christian church before this tragedy.

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY

The glory of God that once filled the temple has now filled the people of God. Followers of Jesus are God’s temple (1 Corinthians 3:16–17). The indwelling Holy Spirit makes God’s people holy—set apart for God. Their conduct is meant to reflect this.

Small Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

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Pre-Service (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: [Coloring Page](#)

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have play stations with various board games, activities, or use games from the extra Games & Activities Guide to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them!

Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Allow quieter kids who don't engage with the board games to color. Involve them in the curiosity questions.

While kids are playing in their opening activity groups..

Pose the following "I'm curious" questions. Say "I'm curious..." before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

I'm curious ...

- **What's something you used to need help doing but now can easily do yourself?
Who helped you learn to do it?**
- **How does it feel to ask for help? Why?**

Small Group Begins: Welcome Question 2–3 min

SUPPLIES: whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils

As kids arrive, invite them to write/draw the answer to the Welcome Question:

"What's something you do every day that you can't do on your own?" Set out sheets of paper and colored pencils.

Right at your service time, move into Small Group time by sharing your own answers and allowing kids their answers.

Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids 5–8 min

Help kids find Colossians 1 and 3 by showing them that Colossians is one of Paul's letters near the back of their Bibles. Since this letter was likely read aloud to the church who received it, read it aloud to kids.

Read Colossians 1:24–29; 3:10–14

- **According to Paul's words to the Colossians, what's the mystery at the heart of God's big story?** (If needed, help kids reread Colossians 1:27.)
- **As Jesus-followers, Christ is in us! What does this mean?**
- **Showing mercy means you forgive someone and then don't treat them in the way their actions deserve. When has someone showed mercy to you?**
- **Paul writes that we are to "put on tender mercy and kindness as if they were your clothes" (Colossians 3:12). You can put on a jacket or a pair of shoes. How can you put on mercy and kindness?**
- **As Jesus-followers, we're "God's chosen people" (Colossians 3:12). God chose you! How do you think He'd describe you?**
- **Through Jesus, God will forgive all our sins. What are three words you'd use to praise God for His forgiveness?**

"Paul challenges us to love and forgive one another—and others—the way God loves and forgives us. We can find the power to love, forgive, and show mercy through His Holy Spirit. Let's thank God for helping us do what we wouldn't be able to do on our own."

Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and then find a partner. Ask partners to pray for one another aloud (if they're willing). Suggest kids pray for their partners to feel God's love and forgiveness and to love and forgive others in turn. Close the time of prayer by thanking God for hearing both the spoken and silent prayers.

Leader Tip: Not every child will be willing to pray aloud, and that's OK. But it's worth asking because hearing someone pray for you both builds faith in God and deepens relationships with one another. That's true whether you pray for a child or she hears another child pray for her.

Small Group Discussion: Older Kids 8–12 min

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

Help kids find Colossians 1 and 3 by showing them that Colossians is one of Paul's letters near the back of their Bibles.

Give a brief overview of the history and context using the info on page 3 of this guide.

Since this letter was likely read aloud to the church who received it, choose an older kid or teen volunteer to be "Paul" and read Colossians 1:24–29 and 3:10–14 aloud to the group.

- **According to Paul's words to the Colossians, what's the mystery at the heart of God's big story?** (If needed, encourage kids to reread Colossians 1:27.)
- **As Jesus-followers, Christ is in us! What does this mean?**
- **Paul writes that we "have been raised up with Christ" and should, therefore, "think about things that are in heaven" (Colossians 3:1). What sorts of things do you think God wants us to think about?**
- **As Jesus-followers, what does Paul say we should "put on"?** (If needed, encourage kids to reread Colossians 3:12–14.)
- **Showing mercy means you forgive someone, and you don't treat them in the way their actions deserve. Describe a time someone showed mercy to you.**
- **Paul writes that "you are God's chosen people" (Colossians 3:12). What do you think that means? How does it feel knowing God has chosen you?**
- **When God asks us to love and forgive others, He's not asking us to do something He has not done Himself. He loves us, and through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus, we can experience complete forgiveness for our sins—the wrong things we do. Let's pause to consider all the ways we experience God's love and forgiveness.**
- **Through Jesus, God will forgive all our sins. What are three words you'd use to praise God for His forgiveness?**

"It may seem impossible to love and forgive some people. Yet Paul challenges us to love and forgive one another—and others—the way God loves and forgives us. Here's how: We can find the power to love, forgive, and even show mercy through the Holy Spirit. Let's thank God for helping us do what we wouldn't be able to do on our own."

Prayer Time: Older Kids

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and then find a partner. Ask partners to pray for one another aloud (if they're willing). Suggest kids pray their partners feel God's love and forgiveness and also love and forgive others. Close the prayer time by thanking God for hearing both the spoken and silent prayers.

Older Kids – Notes Page

****Complete the Notes Page with kids. Helping them to fill out all of the spaces. This is an important way for parents to see what their kids are learning each way and have meaningful conversations at home!**

Leader Tip: The word love can mean a lot of different things. God's love isn't like the wishy-washy love of the world. Help kids understand that the love of God is not just a feeling but selfless actions that put others before ourselves. Love is who God is. As Jesus-followers, we can be filled with God's love so that *Christlike* love becomes what describes us best!

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

"Our Word of Wonder today is 1 Corinthians 13:13. We're discovering how God's love can help us love—and forgive—others. Let's read the Word of Wonder together to be reminded of how important it is to live with faith, hope, and most important of all, love."

Have kids open their Bibles to 1 Corinthians 13:13. Invite kids to join you in reading the verse very slowly (think slow motion!). Read the verse together multiple times, speeding up each time. Encourage kids who know the verse already to try saying it with their eyes closed.

Gather kids to talk about these questions:

- **We say we "love" lots of things. What's the difference between loving pizza and loving people?**
- **If you have love, how does that show up in how you treat family? Friends? Strangers? Yourself?**

Word of Wonder Activity

SUPPLIES: coins (1 coin for every 2 kids, plus a few extras)

Help kids form pairs. Give each pair a coin and ask the partner wearing the most blue to hold it. Explain that each partner will take turns hiding their pair's coin in one of their two fists. Partners not holding coins will attempt to pick which fist is holding the coin as everyone together repeats the Word of Wonder, pausing slightly between the words *faith*, *hope*, and *love*. Partners not holding coins will tap their partners' closed fists at *faith*, again at *hope*, and finally at *love*. Whichever fist is tapped at *love* will be the guess for where a coin is hiding.

Play multiple rounds, with partners switching who's holding the coin. Consider switching up partners too.

"All three things we listed are important, but the most important is love. We find it in God, who helps us love and forgive others. When we aren't sure how to love others well, we can always turn to God for help!"

Make It Inclusive!

If a child is unable to hold or hide a coin, don't give that pair a coin. Instead, tell those partners they're on their honor to pick one hand and let their partners guess which hand they're thinking of.

Large Group!

Responding in Worship: A Breath of Forgiveness

RESOURCES: [Walking in Love Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Gather kids together and explain you'll be leading them in a guided prayer—a prayer in which you suggest different things to pray about as you move through your Responding in Worship time. And you won't just describe what kids will pray about; you'll also suggest physical positions during the prayer.

Consider playing an instrumental song from the [Walking in Love Elementary Spotify playlist](#) in the background during this response time.

Show how to stand with both hands in front of you, palms up, hands cupped as if you're about to receive something. Encourage kids to follow your lead.

With hands still cupped, invite kids to practice taking slow, deep breaths in through their nostrils and exhaling through open mouths. Tell kids you'll say together as a prayer: "Because You're forgiving, I can forgive." When you all say, "Because You're forgiving," everyone can take in and exhale a deep breath. Then when you say, "I can forgive," everyone can drop their hands to their sides. Anytime kids' hands aren't relaxed at their sides, encourage them to keep their hands cupped in front of them.

Practice this several times until the slow, steady rhythm feels natural. Explain that in the quiet moments between declaring truths you'll say, "Join me in saying, 'Because You're _____, I can _____,'" and then you'll fill in the next truth to say aloud together. Consider pausing at times to ask kids to pray about how those truths might play out in their lives.

Some other truths to declare include the following:

- Because You're loving ... I can love.
- Because You're merciful ... I can show mercy.
- Because You're kind ... I can be kind.
- Because You're gentle ... I can be gentle.
- Because You're patient ... I can be patient.

While kids are still in a prayerful mood, suggest they quietly think of someone they need to forgive and then ask God for a forgiving heart toward that person.

Close the prayer time by thanking God for His great love and forgiveness and for helping each of you show His love to the world.

Leader Tip: This is a quiet, contemplative approach to prayer. If you encourage kids to find their own spaces in your room and avoid being next to buddies who might distract them, you'll find the experience powerful. Your kids are declaring the truth of God's Word, and that has an impact!

Leader Tip: You may have kids in your ministry who have experienced trauma or abuse. Be looking for kids who seem emotional, who stay disengaged, or who act out. It's important kids know that loving and forgiving people who have hurt them doesn't mean what those people did is OK. If a child reveals anything that leads you to suspect any abuse, report it to your ministry leader.