



Session 4



LIVE LIKE JESUS

Ephesians 1–6

During Paul's day, the city of Ephesus was thriving and was likely at its greatest economically and politically. The city at that time boasted around 250,000 residents and would have been the fourth largest city in the world. In a city that size, it is no wonder that Paul spent a significant amount of time there. You might recall that after Paul left his three-year stint in Ephesus, he penned the book of Romans. Shortly after that writing, Paul was imprisoned and held for quite a number of years. While in prison, Paul penned this letter to the Ephesians and other letters contained in the New Testament.

The book of Ephesians contains one of the best descriptions of what Christian faith looks like as well as rules for the church on how they should operate. It is interesting to note that Paul wrote some of these letters to churches following his explanation of the gospel which he expounded upon in the book of Romans. Paul had clearly identified for the Roman believers that salvation comes only through faith in the resurrected Christ and that salvation is a gift from God, unable to be bought with money or earned by human effort.

Paul began the letter to the Ephesians by reminding them of that very thing. Believers have been redeemed by Jesus' shed blood for the forgiveness of their sins. Paul went on to explain that just the benefit of that gracious gift is not the end for believers. If believers follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, they will do and say things that line up with God's will.

Two major themes dominate the book of Ephesians. The first theme is that of the church's relationship with one another. Paul taught that unity should rule the day. Believers should work together to advance the church's mission—sharing the truth of the gospel with others. The second major theme is the individual believer's responsibility to participate in the church's work. Paul identified specific roles that God has called individuals to and identified the armor that could be used to fight the advances of the devil.

SESSION FOCUS

TEXT TRUTH

God wants people to live like Jesus.

BIBLE STORY

Ephesians 1–6

BIBLE VERSE

Ephesians 4:15

CHRIST IN CONTEXT

The book of Ephesians proclaims that Jesus is above every ruler and authority on earth. He reigns over everything and is head of His church, the people of God.

BIBLE SKILLS: Preschoolers will . . .

- Begin to use simple tools (*printed and digital resources*) for Bible discovery.
- Begin to understand that a Bible reference includes a book, chapter, and verse.



CONNECT WITH FAMILIES

Provide these weekly resources to help families explore the Bible together.

- Explore the Bible at Home (Printable: Music & Print Extras)
- Preschool Activity Page
- Preschool Family Card

MISSIONS ACTIVITY: EXAMINE BUILDING SUPPLIES



Tools: Bible; building supplies such as hammer, screwdriver, nails, and screws mounted on cardboard and covered with clear contact plastic; roofing tile; PVC pieces; smooth wood pieces; sandpaper

- Place the Bible, tools, and building supplies on a table or the floor.
- As children examine the supplies and tools, talk about how the tools or materials are used. Comment that some people from churches travel to other places to help build or repair churches or buildings.
- Say: “Missionaries need help. Sometimes people travel to help the missionaries build or make repairs. Other people pray or give money to help missionaries.”
- Tell the children about anyone in your church who has been or is going on a volunteer mission trip. Thank God that we can help others. Say: “Jesus showed us how to help others.”

LEADER TIP!

Include this special missions-focused activity in addition to preschoolers’ Bible Explorations.

LEADER TIP!

Stay near the preschoolers as they examine real building supplies.

TEXT TRUTH

God wants people to live like Jesus.

BIBLE STORY

Paul Encouraged Church Friends
Ephesians 1–6

BIBLE VERSE

Let us grow in every way like Jesus.
Ephesians 4:15

PAUL ENCOURAGED CHURCH FRIENDS

Ephesians 1–6

Paul had been traveling and teaching. Everywhere he went, Paul preached to the people about Jesus. Many people were glad to hear what Paul said. Others got angry and tried to stop Paul. That is why he was sometimes in jail!

Once while Paul was in jail, he wrote a letter to church friends in the city of Ephesus. Paul had been in Ephesus before and helped the people know more about Jesus. Now Paul wanted to help the church friends keep on doing good works and teaching.

Paul had important things to tell the people about church. Paul wanted to help the people in Ephesus understand how church people were to act. Paul said, “Get along with one another. You are all God’s children—and God wants all of you to work together in the church. Some of you are to be teachers, some preachers, and some pastors. Let us all learn more about what God wants us to do and how we can live like Jesus.”

Paul prayed for his friends in the Ephesus church. He asked God to give everyone in the church wisdom and understanding. Paul said this to his church friends: “Love one another because Jesus loved us and helped us. Do honest work with your own hands so you can help anyone in need. Sing and make music from your heart to God. Give thanks to God for everything.”

Finally, Paul asked the church friends to pray for him. Then Paul gave the letter to a friend to deliver to the friends in Ephesus.

LEADER TIP

You choose! Are your preschoolers ready to learn memory verses? Decide which wording of the session Bible verse you want to use with your group.

BIBLE VERSE



From the Bible text:

Let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Jesus. Ephesians 4:15

Paraphrase:

Let us grow in every way like Jesus. Ephesians 4:15

CIRCLE TIME (10-15 MINUTES, DEPENDING ON YOUR AGE GROUP)

GATHER

- Encourage preschoolers to complete their activities and join you in the Circle Time area.
- Pass a paper scroll around the circle as you sing a song. (See Leader Tip.) When the song is finished, open the scroll and say the word *Ephesians*.
- Say: “Paul wrote letters to church people to help them know how to live. Today we will look at a letter Paul wrote to the church people living in a place called Ephesus.”

HEAR THE BIBLE STORY

- Open the Bible to the marker at Ephesians 1. Display the Story Picture.
- Tell the Bible story to preschoolers, using your own words. Pass the Story Picture around the circle. Ask children who is writing a letter.
- Continue: “What are some things Paul told the church people that they should do?” (Live like Jesus. Get along with each other. Love each other. Worship God.)
- Point to the Text Truth Poster. Read and repeat today’s Text Truth: God wants people to live like Jesus.
- Ask a child to attach the Poster Card to the poster.

PRACTICE BIBLE SKILLS

- Ask: “Have you heard of an atlas? What do you think an atlas is?” Say: “An atlas is a book of maps. A Bible atlas includes maps from Old and New Testament times. We can look at some maps to see where Paul traveled to tell people about Jesus.”
- Locate a map of Ephesus in the resource material. Point out the city to preschoolers.
- Look at other maps of Paul’s missionary journeys if time allows. (Note: Paul visited Ephesus during his second and third missionary journeys.)

PRAY

- Thank God for the Bible that helps people know how to live like Jesus. Ask God to help preschoolers live like Jesus.

TOOLS

- Bible
- Music & Print Extras
- children’s Bible atlas or dictionary
- copy paper
- marker
- string
- tape

LEADER TIP!

For the “Gather” activity, print the word *Ephesians* in large letters on a sheet of paper. Roll the paper like a scroll and tie it with string.

PACK ITEMS

- 4 Story Picture: Paul Encouraged Church Friends
- 15 Text Truth Poster
- 16 Text Truth Poster Cards
- 23 Bible Book Markers

LEADER TIP!

Show preschoolers where the book of Ephesians is located on the Bible Timeline for Kids.

EXPLORATION STATIONS (45-60 MINUTES)

TEXT TRUTH

God wants people to live like Jesus.

BIBLE STORY

Paul Encouraged Church
Friends
Ephesians 1-6

BIBLE VERSE

Let us grow in every way like Jesus.
Ephesians 4:15

PACK ITEMS

4 Story Picture: Paul Encouraged Church Friends
20 Book: *I Can Find a Bible Verse*
28 September Verse Markers

LEADER TIP!

Consider placing cards beneath the gel bags and guiding children to trace the words they see under the gel.

Set up at least three stations to provide choices of multisensory activities and movement for busy preschoolers. Use the Bible in every exploration.

WRITE ON GEL BAGS

Tools: Bible, Activity Page, quart-size ziplock freezer bags, colored hair gel, 6 index cards, pen or permanent marker

- Write on each card a word or phrase from the Bible story: *get along, work together, live like Jesus, help, sing, give thanks.*
- Fill several bags half-full with hair gel. Press out all the air and seal the bags.
- Guide a child to use his finger to “write” words on a gel bag. An older child may want to copy the words from the cards. Other children may draw shapes or letters.
- Tell the Bible story as the children “write.” Say: “Paul wrote a letter to the Ephesian church to remind the people to do these things and live like Jesus.”
- Show the picture on the Activity Page.

VISIT THE WORSHIP CENTER

Tools: Bible

- Visit the worship center if it is not in use. Show children where the pastor stands to read the Bible and encourage people to do what the Bible says.
- Invite a child to stand at a podium or on the stage and say today’s Text Truth.
- Say: “Paul talked to people in many places. One place was Ephesus. Paul wrote a letter to the church people in Ephesus and told them to live like Jesus.”
- Return to the room and talk about what the children saw.
- Find the book of Ephesians in the Bible.

MAKE A PEOPLE & CHURCH COLLAGE

Tools: Bible, Story Picture: Paul Encouraged Church Friends, small pictures of people, glue sticks or clear tape, large piece of paper, marker

- Use the marker to draw a large church outline on the paper. Somewhere on the paper, write the Bible verse.
- Tape the paper to the wall. Put the people pictures and glue sticks on a table or chair near the paper.
- Invite one or two children to work on a collage. Point to the church outline and comment that the church has people who love and help one another.
- Show the children the people pictures and suggest that children choose several pictures to glue inside the church outline.
- Read the verse printed on the collage. Say: "At church, people read the Bible. People learn to live like Jesus."

GRAB A BAG & BUILD

Tools: Bible, September Verse Markers, wooden blocks, plastic interlocking bricks, foam blocks, large paper bags, Music & Print Extras

- Put an assortment of blocks and plastic bricks in each bag. Place the bags on the floor.
- Invite two or three children to get a bag and build together using the blocks in their bag. Thank the children for thinking and working together.
- Say: "You worked together and helped one another. That is something Paul told the people in the church to do. Church people should do honest work and do what is needed to help others."
- Open the Bible to the marker placed at Ephesians 4:15. Lead children to say the Bible verse together.
- Play the song "Help One Another in Love" (track 6).

READ A BOOK & SEARCH THE BIBLE

Tools: 2 or 3 Bibles, Book: I Can Find a Bible Verse

- Distribute Bibles to preschoolers. Talk about the similarities and differences in the Bibles. Assure children that all the Bibles tell about God and Jesus and how God wants us to live.
- Say: "Let's read this book about the Bible, then do what the book says."
- Read the book, taking time to point out related features in the actual Bibles children have.
- Assist children in finding today's Bible verse at Ephesians 4:15. Help preschoolers say the verse together.
- Remark: "Paul's letters are in the Bible. Paul's letters helped people know how to live for Jesus."

TEXT TRUTH

God wants people to live like Jesus.

BIBLE STORY

Paul Encouraged Church Friends
Ephesians 1–6
The Bible story is printed on the back of the Story Picture.

BIBLE VERSE

Let us grow in every way like Jesus.
Ephesians 4:15

PACK ITEMS

4 Story Picture: Paul Encouraged Church Friends
23 Bible Book Markers
31 Letters of Paul Matching Cards

NEXT HOUR (MORE EXPLORATIONS FOR PRESCHOOLERS)

Look for printable Next Hour Helps in Music & Print Extras.

PLAY INSTRUMENTS

Tools: Bible, Bible Book Markers, worship music, musical instruments

- Place the marker at Ephesians 5:19. Invite a child to open the Bible to the marker. Read the verse.
- Say: “Paul wrote a letter to the church people in Ephesus to help them know how to live like Jesus. In this verse, Paul told the people that they should give thanks to God and sing and worship Him.”
- Invite preschoolers to play musical instruments and sing along with their favorite worship songs, just as Paul instructed the Ephesians to do.

PLAY WITH PEOPLE FIGURES

Tools: Bible, 1 or 2 books about loving and helping, wooden blocks, toy dollhouse, plastic people figures, Story Picture: Paul Encouraged Church Friends

- Children often play out their family activities. Observe children as they move the figures and pretend.
- Listen for opportunities to relate the children’s play to today’s emphasis on living like Jesus. Remark that Paul wrote to people in the church and encouraged them to help and love one another.
- Read a book, then help children consider ways they can work and help others.
- Show the Story Picture and recall Paul’s letter to the Ephesian church.

PASS SCROLLS OVER & UNDER

Tools: Bible, 2 papers rolled up and tied like scrolls, 2 baskets

- Show the scrolls to preschoolers and remind them that people in Bible times often sent letters that were written on parchment and rolled up.
- Say: “Paul wrote his letter to the church people in Ephesus, then he gave the letter to someone to deliver to the people.”
- Invite preschoolers to pass scrolls from one person to another. Form two teams of children and direct the children to stand in two lines. Put a basket at the end of each line.

- Instruct the first child in a line to pass the paper scroll over his head to the child behind him. Direct that child to pass the scroll behind his legs to the person behind him. Continue passing over and under until the scroll reaches the end of the line. Tell the child to place the scroll in the basket.

MATCH CARDS & WORK PUZZLES

Tools: Bible, Letters of Paul Matching Cards, 2 or 3 puzzles related to helping and being kind

- Place the puzzles and cards on a table. Turn the puzzles facedown.
- Invite a child to choose a puzzle to work. Relate the pictures on the puzzles to today's focus on living like Jesus. Comment that Paul encouraged people to help and love one another.
- Encourage another child to match cards showing Bible books that are the letters of Paul. After matches are made, help the child locate the books in the New Testament part of the Bible.

CIRCLE TIME

GATHER

- Play music as children find places in the circle.
- Pass a small ball around the circle. As each child receives the ball, help him name a way he can be like Jesus. Give suggestions.

REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

- Open the Bible to the book of Ephesians. Hold the Story Picture and recall the Bible story.
- Say: "Paul cared about people and wanted them to know how to live for Jesus. Paul sent letters to church friends in many places."
- Remark that your pastor and other church leaders help people know what God wants them to do.

PRACTICE BIBLE SKILLS

- Distribute Bibles to children, or ask those who brought a Bible to get theirs.
- Help children locate the book of Ephesians. Tell children that this book is in the New Testament part of the Bible.
- Give each child a sticky note to place on the page in his Bible that has today's Bible verse.
- Lead children to say the Bible verse together.

PRAY

- Ask God to help children listen and learn from the Bible.
- Pray for God to help you and children live like Jesus.