

Teacher Notecards Level 6, Quarter B— God—Up Close and Personal

Use these Teacher Notecards as a reference when teaching
Explore Scripture.*

Print on paper or cardstock. Fold in half, then fold again along the
gray line. This will create a two-sided, notecard-sized piece for you
to hold in your hand.

*The narrative has been edited to fit on these cards. Please see the full *Explore Scripture*
sections of each lesson for more interactivity, application, and content.

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corresponding **DiscipleLand** Teacher Guide.

Big Idea: **Christians cheerfully reflect God's joy throughout their daily lives.**

How to Meet with God

1. **Ready!**—Enter God's presence.

- Approach God reverently—adopt an attitude of humility, honor, and praise
- Focus on God, not yourself—reflect on His names, characteristics, or abilities
- Get clean!—confess any sinful attitudes, thoughts, or actions

2. **Set!**—Enjoy God's fellowship.

- Read your Bible—expect God to speak directly to you
- Record your highlights—write key blessings, daily events, victories, failures, etc.
- Pray from your heart—talk openly with God

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3. **Go!**—Walk in God's victory.

- Trust the Holy Spirit's guidance—listen for His direction
- Resolve to obey—make a realistic plan to follow
- Claim Christ's power—die to self and live for Jesus

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Big Idea: **Christians cheerfully reflect God's joy throughout their daily lives.**

Philippians 1-4

Your mission right now is to tell me all you can about the city of “Philippi.”

Divide kids into groups and distribute Bible reference tools. After a few minutes, have each group present its findings.

We are going to take a quick zoom through the four chapters of Philippians. This amazing group of believers in Philippi received this letter from Paul. In the coming lessons, we will focus on each chapter and apply the timeless truths of God's Word to our lives.

First of all, let's set the scene. Paul wrote this letter from prison, and a man named Epaphroditus delivered the message to the church in Philippi (picture 6B.1). *What was Paul's connection with Philippi?* Ask a volunteer to read Acts 16:11-12, 20:6. (On his second and third missionary trips, Paul visited Philippi, where he started a church.) *What did you learn about Paul's time in Philippi?* Children should recount any details about Paul and Silas being in jail, worshiping during an earthquake,

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and then leading the jailer and his family to become Christians. *Philippi can be located today in the hill town of Filippi in the Kavala region of Greece.* Let kids look on a modern map and find the city of Filippi (picture 6B.2).

Now let's take a look at what Paul wrote and try to find some key themes to help us get the big picture. Each group will be responsible for reading one of the chapters.

Begin with the group that read Philippians 1. Ask for a spokesperson to give a summary of the chapter and then ask that group the following questions: *What was the source of joy in this chapter? What impression or insight did you get from reading through this chapter? What title would you give this chapter?*

Repeat these steps with the groups that looked at chapters 2-4. After everyone has shared their findings and written titles for the chapters, brainstorm a main theme for the entire book.

We're in for an exciting journey to discover how we can be joyful in any situation we encounter. Studying the book of Philippians will help us focus on God rather than ourselves. As we commit to meditate on God's Word and pray, we will look forward to hearing God speak and to grow closer to Him!

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Big Idea: **Christians confidently trust God to work out His plan through their circumstances.**

How to Meet with God (picture 6B.3)

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Big Idea: **Christians confidently trust God to work out His plan through their circumstances.**

Philippians 1

Let’s set the scene for this first chapter of Philippians. *Where was Paul?* (He was in prison.) Describe what you think a first-century prison was like. Give kids an opportunity to respond. Paul was no stranger to a jail cell. He was imprisoned at least four times (Acts 16:23; 21:33; 23:35; 28:16), spending more than seven years in jail!

Paul was in prison for speaking the truth about Jesus. *What was bad about Paul’s situation? How would citizens today respond if they were jailed in a similar environment?*

Read verses 1-11. Paul’s situation was grim. Let’s check out his attitude. *Does Paul throw any kind of “pity party” due to his situation? Why did Paul choose to be joyful in his prayers?* (The people at Philippi partnered with him.) *How does Paul pray for the believers in Philippi?* (That their love may abound in knowledge and depth of insight so they could discern what is best; that they would be pure and

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blameless, filled with righteousness.)

Read verses 12-18. *How did Paul’s imprisonment encourage other Christians?* (Since Paul was in chains, other believers were encouraged to speak the Word of God courageously and fearlessly.) (picture 6B.4) Paul encountered believers who were preaching about Christ, but who had wrong motives. *What was Paul’s response to them?* (He rejoiced because he knew the message of Christ was being preached.)

Read verses 19-30. *What gave Paul the assurance that Christ would be exalted no matter what happened to him?* (He counted on their prayers and the help of the Holy Spirit.) It didn’t matter to Paul if he lived or died. *Why? How did Paul think his experience would help the Philippians?* (Their joy in Christ would overflow.) *No matter what happened to them, how did Paul urge the believers to live?* (To conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ.)

If you were a believer from Philippi, what would your thoughts or comments be after reading this letter? Share your own thoughts and invite children to also comment.

Paul found an inner peace that didn’t come from his own circumstances, but came from his relationship with Jesus Christ. We can follow his example and find joy—no matter what happens!

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Big Idea: **Christians selflessly imitate Jesus' humble attitude.**

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Big Idea: **Christians selflessly imitate Jesus' humble attitude.**

Philippians 2

Ask for volunteers to read Philippians 2 and divide the verses among them. Paul focuses on Jesus' example, revealing an attitude that we can exhibit. Read verses 1-13 (picture 6B.5).

Now read verses 14-18. Paul suggests ways to show Christian faith to the world. *Why does Paul want the Philippian believers to do things without protests or arguments? (It is Christlike.) What happens to a Christian's testimony if he or she is observed complaining and arguing? (He or she isn't imitating Christ's attitude.) What do you know about stars? Let kids share facts they've learned about stars. Why do you think Paul wants the believers in Philippi to be like stars? What other analogies could Paul have used?*

In verse 18, what does Paul say should bring believers joy? (Joy should come from serving.) What are some ways the Philippian believers might have served others? Let children respond. What do we learn about Timothy? (Paul hoped to send Timothy

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to Philippi. Timothy shared Paul's feelings; he cared, served like a son, helped spread the Gospel.) (picture 6B.6) *What do we learn about Epaphroditus? (He had brought gifts to the Philippian Christians, worked and fought by Paul's side, brought Paul messages from Philippi, was eager to see them, was upset by something said about him, almost died of an illness, deserves honor, risked his life to help Paul, served in place of the Philippians who couldn't be with Paul.)*

After learning so many truths, let's think about what they mean and how we can apply them. Ask these questions and encourage each child to contribute to the discussion. Would you expect someone who doesn't know Jesus as his or her Savior to be humble? Why would it be unusual for a nonbeliever to be humble? Who have you seen exhibit a humble attitude? Why do you think people choose to act humbly? When have you chosen humility? What will help you remember to imitate Christ's humility?

Just as Paul urged the church in Philippi, let's selflessly imitate Christ's humble attitude.

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Big Idea: **Christians wisely value Christ above all achievements and possessions.**

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Philippians 3

Today as we look at Philippians 3, you'll notice that Paul continues his theme of joy or rejoicing. Invite volunteers to read chapter 3 aloud. Start with verse 1. *What were the Philippians to rejoice in?* (They were to rejoice in the Lord.) *Paul acknowledges that he is repeating himself, but why does he repeat himself?* (It is a safeguard or a good reminder for them.)

The Jewish Christians bragged about their religious ceremonies. *What is the danger of bragging?* Encourage responses.

Read verses 2-6 (picture 6B.7). Paul chose not to brag, but instead presented his resume. *What was his resume?* (Verse 5 is his resume.) *Why would a devout Jew be proud to say he persecuted the church?* (Devout Jews didn't believe Jesus was the Messiah and they would be glad to get rid of the blaspheming Christians.)

Read verses 7-11. *In verse 7, how does Paul now value his Jewish heritage?* (He

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counts it a loss or doesn't see it as worth anything.) *What does he value instead? What does Paul specifically say he wants to know about Christ?* (He wants to know the power of Jesus' resurrection and share in His sufferings.) *How does knowing Jesus' great worth help in your Christian journey?* Encourage responses.

Read verses 12-21. *How did Paul show humility?* (He admitted that he hadn't yet attained his goal.) *Why does Paul want to forget what was in his past?* (Now that God had forgiven his sins, Paul's past didn't matter.)

Explain that Paul used a sports metaphor (running) to reinforce his message (picture 6B.8). Have children who play sports contribute to the conversation and relate their answers to their specific sport. Choose several kids to answer the following questions:

Why do you participate in the sport? When you play, what does the coach want you to be thinking about? What is your goal during the game? Who do you listen to during the game? What is the ultimate prize for your sport?

Paul acted like a coach to the Philippian Christians. He shared his knowledge of being a Christian and encouraged them to find joy and value in knowing Jesus Christ. Let Paul be your coach and follow his advice—press on towards knowing Jesus better and better!

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Big Idea: **Christians sincerely exhibit Jesus' peace and contentment.**

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Big Idea: **Christians sincerely exhibit Jesus' peace and contentment.**

Philippians 4

As we read Philippians 4, let's look for keys that will unlock some secrets to how Paul could find peace and contentment while confined to a jail cell.

Read Philippians 4:1. *What does Paul's greeting reveal about his attitude in jail?* (He is able to rejoice and have peace even while in a jail cell.)

Read verses 2-3. *Why does Paul want the two women to resolve their conflict?* (They had helped him spread the Gospel and he wants them to continue to work together.) Paul asks a “yokefellow” to help them. *What do you know about a yoke?* (It forces two animals to work together as they plow or pull a cart.) *How did Paul's word choice create a good word picture?*

Read Philippians 4:4-7 (picture 6B.9). *What does Paul encourage the Philippians to do instead of worry?* (Pray.) Prayer is God's secret tool to release His peace. As you pray, worry is not able to get near you because Jesus is guarding your mind as you focus on Him!

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Read verses 8-9. Paul gives us another secret to experiencing peace. *What is it?* (Limit thinking to good subjects.) *Why does Paul want Christians to put these things into practice?* (He wants us to experience the same peace of mind and heart that he experienced.)

Read verses 10-13. *Do you know anyone who always seems to be content? What do you suppose is that person's secret to contentment?*

Read Philippians 4:14-20 (picture 6B.10). *How do we know that the people in the Philippian church were generous?* (They gave Paul a financial gift.) *What does Paul mean when he says that he wants it credited to their account?* (He knew that God would bless them for giving.) Paul doesn't worry about money or his circumstances because he is confident in God's power to supply all his needs.

Read verses 21-23. Describe the relationship that existed among the Philippian believers. (They seem close-knit and all send greetings.) *What could help build unity among Christians?*

Paul's secret is ours, too—Jesus gives us power to be content and to experience peace in any situation! We can claim Christ's power by dying to our own interests and trusting Jesus Christ to live His life through us!

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Big Idea: **Christians willingly accept God's challenge to walk in Christ's steps.**

How to Meet with God—Review

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Big Idea: **Christians willingly accept God's challenge to walk in Christ's steps.**

Ephesians 1-6

Today we will zoom through the Book of Ephesians. Paul wrote this letter from prison in Rome. Point out the locations of Ephesus and Rome in relation to Philippi (picture 6B.11). Many of Paul's letters were copied and passed around to groups of believers in the area. *Which other churches might have had an early opportunity to read Paul's letter?* The Book of Ephesians is full of timeless truths for all Christians. Let's find some keys and themes to help us get the big picture of Ephesians.

Begin with the group that read chapter 4. Let the group share its answers to the **Zoom!** chart. The rest of the class can fill in their charts as the information is presented. What key details stood out? What verse or verses were keys to the chapter's theme? What impressions or insights did you get from reading this chapter?

(picture 6B.12) Repeat these steps with the groups that examined chapters 5-6. After each group has shared and everyone has written titles for the chapters, brain-

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storm a main theme for the entire book.

After summarizing each chapter of Ephesians, you may have questions about what Paul wrote. Your questions will guide you to look for information to better understand each chapter. Allow time for children to write down questions that will help them better understand what God wants to say to them through Ephesians. Collect the questions and post them on a bulletin board or poster. As students research and discover answers, have them write them on the papers.

Now that you've been introduced to Ephesians, what chapter do you think you'll enjoy most during your quiet-times? What key words did you hear? What do you anticipate getting out of this study?

Let's prepare ourselves to learn truths that will change our lives and help us become more like Christ. Spend some time in prayer letting kids ask God to speak to them through the book of Ephesians.

Also use this time to discuss God's salvation message. Pray with any kids ready to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. See **Good News for Kids** on the inside back cover of the Teacher Guide for more information.

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Big Idea: **Christians freely receive every spiritual blessing through Christ.**

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Ephesians 1

Ask for a volunteer to read Ephesians 1:1-3. *What two things does Paul note about the Ephesians?* (They are called saints and faithful in Christ Jesus.) As we look at the next few verses we will discover the spiritual blessings that belong to anyone who trusts in Jesus Christ for salvation. Many people want God’s blessings but haven’t placed their complete trust in what Jesus did on the cross. Blessings come from Christ and belong to all those who follow Him.

Read verse 4. *Do you feel holy or blameless?* Christ’s righteousness becomes ours, not because we deserve it, but because He freely gives it to us.

Read verses 6-14. *Which of these blessings do you notice in your life? How could these blessings be more evident? What mystery is revealed to us?* (picture 6B.13) *What ways does the Holy Spirit help Christians?* (The Holy Spirit guides, reminds them of what Christ has said, provides strength and power, etc.)

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Ask someone to read verses 15-23 (picture 6B.14). *How might Paul have known the Ephesians had strong faith in Christ and love for the saints?* Paul’s love for the Ephesians is evident in his prayer for them. *What does Paul want his readers to receive from God?* (He wants them to get wisdom and knowledge about God and have the Lord show Himself to them so they will know Him better.) Next, Paul prays for three things to happen. *What are they?* (They will know the hope to which they’ve been called, the glory of God’s riches, and how great His power is.) *Do you think all Christians understand these things? How would people live differently if they realized the hope they have because of God’s riches and power?*

Paul finishes this chapter explaining Christ’s power and authority. *How does Paul describe the scope of Christ’s power?* (Christ is above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given—now and forever!) *What word picture did he use?* (Christ is the head and the Church is the body.) This word picture helps us recognize that Christians are in Christ and part of Him, just as the head is part of the physical body. So we are blessed with every spiritual blessing because we are “in Christ.” Now that’s a picture you don’t want to forget! Let’s make sure we live in a way that shows the world that we are in Christ and that He has given us every spiritual blessing!

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Big Idea: **Christians fully embrace Jesus' finished work for them on the cross.**

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Ephesians 2

Ask for a volunteer to read Ephesians 2:4-5. *Why do you think Paul chose the contrasting words "dead" and "alive"?* (We were dead in our sins, but are made alive in Christ.) (picture 6B.15)

What is the difference between mercy and grace? (Mercy is not receiving punishment that we truly deserve. Grace is receiving blessings that we truly do not deserve.) *Why is it so important that God is both merciful and gracious?* (If God didn't also extend His mercy to us, receiving God's grace would be a temporary blessing.)

Read Ephesians 2:8-10. *Some Christians think that they can add their good works to what Christ accomplished on the cross. How would adding human efforts dilute the message of grace?* (Works-based salvation no longer depends solely on what Christ did. Works-based salvation includes personal pride and boasting—this is contrary to the message of the Gospel.)

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Why should knowing about God's mercy and grace motivate Christians to do good works? Emphasize that God made Christians, like all His creation, to bring glory to Himself. *How can your actions, words, or works bring glory to God? What are ways your works could reach people with the Gospel?*

What do you know about the relationship between Jews and Gentiles (all non-Jews) in the Old Testament? Possible answers: Jews were God's people but Gentiles were excluded; God made promises to the Jews, but Gentiles were not recipients; these two groups were often enemies.

Paul explains to his fellow Jews that works—following the Jewish laws—will not lead to salvation. Salvation comes from God as a free gift to those who believe. Paul explains to the Gentiles that through the Gospel they are one in Christ. *How do you think Gentiles responded to this dramatic reversal of their status? How do you think Jews reacted to this change?* Encourage responses (picture 6B.16).

Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians were no longer two separate groups. They became fellow citizens, members of God's family, and part of God's building, with Christ as cornerstone (Matthew 21:42).

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Big Idea: **Christians eagerly experience the Holy Spirit's indwelling power and love.**

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Big Idea: **Christians eagerly experience the Holy Spirit's indwelling power and love.**

Ephesians 3

The early Church had quite a problem with Jews not accepting Gentiles as Christians. These two groups, which had been very separate, now were part of the same body of Christ—His holy temple! So in Ephesians 3, Paul takes a different approach to explain what God has done. He calls it a “mystery.”

Have the class read Ephesians 3:1 together. Paul was technically a prisoner of the Roman government. Since Christ was the ruler of Paul's life, he acknowledged that he was really a prisoner of Christ. Let's apply the same principle to your math class: you are a student in math class, but ultimately you are also a student of Christ who daily teaches you more about Himself—through math. Paul knew God had given him a special calling to minister to the Gentiles (picture 6B.17).

Ask a volunteer to read Ephesians 3:6. Discuss this verse and explain the mystery: God's great plan of redemption through Christ introduced a truth that had previ-

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ously been veiled—in the church, the body of Christ, Jews and Gentiles are now equal heirs of all God's promises!

Invite volunteers to read Ephesians 3:14-21 to the group. Paul mentions he knelt in prayer. *Why might someone kneel down to pray?* (Kneeling shows humility.) It was customary for Jews to stand and pray, but to kneel showed a real desire to pray with earnest humility.

Whose power does Paul ask for to strengthen the believers? (Power from the Holy Spirit.) *What does Paul ask for to help them better understand God's love?* (The Holy Spirit's power.) *How would Christians act differently if they grasped how much God loved them?* (picture 6B.18)

Paul ends with a blessing for the believers. *Have you ever had a blessing prayed over you?* Encourage kids to respond. *Why does Paul end by reminding them that God can do more than they can imagine?* *Do you know someone with problems or difficulties who might be encouraged by Paul's prayer and blessing?* Take a few minutes and let children pray for the people they mention. Encourage kids to call or email the prayer to the person. Let's all watch for examples of God's riches and fullness as we live in unity together.

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Big Idea: **Christians gladly walk together as unified members of Christ's body.**

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Ephesians 4

In the fourth chapter of Ephesians, Paul gets practical and explains how our walk (the way we live) should reflect our new life in Christ. We want our actions to speak loudly that Jesus lives in us!

Ask a volunteer to read verses 1-6. *How many times does Paul use the word "one"?* (Seven.) *When someone repeats a word several times, what does that tell us?* (Paul was emphasizing an important point.) *What things are unique to the body of Christ?* (One body, one Spirit, one hope, one calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Father.) *How is that different from other religions?* Point out that Hindus have thousands of gods; Muslims have no Son or Spirit, only Allah; Buddhism has no gods, only people reincarnated to higher and higher levels, etc. *Why is it important that believers are "one" in all these ways? What happens when Christians are divided on important matters?* Encourage kids to respond.

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Invite children to read verses 11-16 (picture 6B.19). *What gift has Jesus given to every believer?* (Grace.) Paul explains that grace came to believers through Jesus' death and resurrection.

Have volunteers read verses 17-24. *What does Paul insist that believers do?* (They must live differently than the way they acted before they became Christians.) *What do you think when you see Christians acting like people who are of the world?* Let kids respond.

Read verses 25-32 (picture 6B.20). The Christian's walk includes: words that build up others, don't grieve the Holy Spirit, don't be bitter, don't rage, don't be angry, don't fight, don't slander, be kind, be compassionate, forgive others. You may want to explain some of the concepts used in the passage:

Christians walk in ways that glorify God. The old way of walking is nearly the opposite of God's new way. Be aware of your walk—and strive to live the way that honors the Lord!

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Big Idea: **Christians faithfully follow Jesus' example and shine in the darkness.**

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Ephesians 5

Read Ephesians 5:1-2. *Christ has done so much for us! Why did Jesus go through these things?* (Christ's great love for His followers motivated Him. He didn't want them to face God's judgment and have to pay for their own sins.)

Do you think that Jesus wants His followers to make good choices and to experience the very best life possible? Encourage kids to respond. In verses 3-17, Paul gives examples of evil or “dark” behavior and explains why these activities will harm believers. *According to verse 3, how much darkness should Christians allow into their lives?* (Not even a hint!)

Before the Ephesians met Jesus, they had a pretty rotten record. They didn't have a history of following God's laws. They lived selfishly and did what felt good. Now that Christ had forgiven their sins and provided a way for them to be part of His body, they needed help staying out of the darkness.

①



Read Ephesians 5:15-17. *How does Paul tell the Ephesian believers to conduct themselves?* Paul reveals the solution in the next verse. Read Ephesians 5:18. *What does Paul say to be filled with?* (The Holy Spirit.) (picture 6B.21)

What happens when a person is filled with alcohol? (When someone is drunk, he or she acts differently. The alcohol controls his or her behavior.) *What happens when a person is filled with the Holy Spirit?* (When someone is filled with the Holy Spirit, he or she is directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit influences everything he or she does.)

Read Ephesians 5:21. *When a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, how does he or she behave at home?* (Believers submit to God's authority out of reverence for Christ.) When you submit to someone's authority, you humble yourself and put him or her above yourself and your wants. Jesus submitted to God's plan. This might sound difficult, but remember that our submission and sacrifice to others will be much easier than what Jesus did for us!

Paul advises husbands and wives to follow Jesus' example as the loving Groom with the beloved Church as His bride (picture 6B.22). Read verses 22-33. *Do you think most marriages follow Christ's example? Why or why not?*

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Big Idea: **Christians daily put on the armor of God to triumph in spiritual warfare.**

How to Meet with God—Go!

1. *Ready!*—Enter God's presence.

- Approach God reverently—adopt an attitude of humility, honor, and praise
- Focus on God, not yourself—reflect on His names, characteristics, or abilities
- Get clean!—confess any sinful attitudes, thoughts, or actions

2. *Set!*—Enjoy God's fellowship.

- Read your Bible—expect God to speak directly to you
- Record your highlights—write key blessings, daily events, victories, failures, etc.
- Pray from your heart—talk openly with God

①



3. *Go!*—Walk in God's victory.

- Trust the Holy Spirit's guidance—listen for His direction
- Resolve to obey—make a realistic plan to follow
- Claim Christ's power—die to self and live for Jesus

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Big Idea: **Christians daily put on the armor of God to triumph in spiritual warfare.**

Ephesians 6

Paul wisely showed every family member how to humbly submit to each other. He then shifts the focus and tells us to be strong and be ready to fight a battle. Read Ephesians 6:10-20. God has given us armor to wear, so let's learn about each piece (picture 6B.24).

Belt of Truth—a belt secures the clothing and provides a place for the scabbard (to sheathe the sword). A believer's good character, not brute strength, wins the battle. *What does truth have to do with a battle?* (Satan tells many lies. We divert his lies with God's truth.)

Breastplate of Righteousness—a bronze breastplate extended from the soldier's neck to his thighs. A believer's integrity protects him or her against attacks. *What attacks might hurt a Christian who does not live uprightly?* (hypocrisy; dishonorable conduct; not being trustworthy; neglecting duty; weak morals; etc.)

①



Shoes of the Gospel of Peace—leather boots grip the ground, allowing a soldier to maneuver and stand firm. *Why is peace important in a spiritual battle?* (The Good News about Jesus' love and forgiveness is the only message that will ultimately bring peace; peace is the goal—so the Gospel can flourish.)

Shield of Faith—soldiers soaked their large, leather-covered shields in water to extinguish the enemy's flaming arrows. *How will your faith deflect Satan's arrows?* (believe God's promises; trust that God won't fail; stand up under pressure; etc.)

Helmet of Salvation—a bronze helmet protects the soldier's head. Satan plants thoughts in your mind to make you doubt or forget what your salvation means. *Why would the enemy want to keep you from knowing the rewards and blessings of your salvation?* (forget to claim Christ's power; doubt your salvation, etc.)

Sword of the Spirit—a soldier uses his sword offensively or defensively. The battle is spiritual and must be fought in God's strength. *Why is there power in quoting Scriptures?* (Satan flees; Jesus fought the devil by quoting Scriptures.)

Read verses 18-20. Prayer isn't a piece of armor, but it is a way of equipping ourselves with the armor. We are also told to pray for our fellow warriors. *What was Paul's specific prayer request?* (He wanted to boldly speak God's words.)

②