

LETTERS & DEVOTION

Bible: Letters, Wisdom and the Whole Story, a Fifth Grade Year

Free sample: Unit 1, Lessons 1 to 8

These are 8 lessons from *Bible: Letters, Wisdom and the Whole Story, a Fifth Grade Year: Grade 5*, a Grade 5 year a parent runs at the kitchen table. Each lesson is a short script for you, a page to read together, and a practice sheet you may copy for your household. Answers are at the back.

Bible: Letters, Wisdom and the Whole Story, a Fifth Grade Year: Grade 5. Sample edition.

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Letters & Devotion is a Christian curriculum: a Bible course in every grade from the King James text, and science taught as scientists teach it, including an old earth. Standards references: Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards.



BIBLE · UNIT 1

Letters to Churches

Nine weeks in Paul's mail. How a letter got written, carried and read aloud, then Romans, both Corinthian letters, Galatians, Ephesians and Philippians, each week starting from the problem the letter was answering.

In this unit

1. Letters somebody actually mailed
2. Romans: the same problem, all the way down
3. Romans: nothing gets between
4. 1 Corinthians: a church that picked teams
5. 1 Corinthians: love is a list of verbs
6. 2 Corinthians: the thorn
7. Galatians: free, and not to waste it
8. Ephesians: one new people

BIBLE · UNIT 1 · LESSON 1

Letters somebody actually mailed

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “Letters somebody actually mailed” (Acts 9:1-19), and say Acts 9:4 (part) by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Letters somebody actually mailed

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: Acts 9:1-19, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

Most of the New Testament is mail. Real letters, sent to real towns, carried on foot or by ship, and read out loud to a room full of people who could not all read.

The man who wrote thirteen of them started out hunting Christians. His name was Saul, and he was on the road to Damascus with arrest warrants in his hand.

A light stopped him and a voice asked why he was persecuting Jesus. Saul had never touched Jesus. He had been arresting people who followed him, and Jesus counted that as the same thing.

Saul was blind for three days. A Christian named Ananias, who had every reason to stay home, went and prayed for him. Saul became Paul, and spent the rest of his life writing to churches.

MEMORY WORK (Acts 9:4 (part)):

Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. Jesus asked why are you persecuting me, not why are you persecuting my followers. What is he saying about the church?

2. Ananias was told to go and help the man who had come to arrest him. What would you have said back to God?
3. Who is somebody you would find hard to be kind to this week?

DO: Write a real letter to somebody you cannot see in person: a grandparent, a cousin, a friend who moved away. Put it in an envelope, stamp it, and mail it. Notice how long the answer takes. Paul's letters took weeks to arrive and months to get a reply.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Letters somebody actually mailed

1. What was Saul doing on the road to Damascus when the light stopped him?
 - ☐ A Delivering one of Paul's letters to the church there
 - ☐ B Carrying arrest warrants, on his way to arrest Christians
 - ☐ C Traveling home to Tarsus after finally being released from a long prison sentence
2. Who went and prayed for Saul while he was blind?
 - ☐ A The soldiers who had been traveling with him all the way from Jerusalem
 - ☐ B Nobody. He waited alone until his sight came back
 - ☐ C A Christian named Ananias, who had every reason to stay home
3. The memory verse begins 'Saul, Saul, why'. How does it finish?
 - ☐ A hast thou come to Damascus?
 - ☐ B persecutest thou me?
 - ☐ C callest thou me Lord?
4. This week calls most of the New Testament mail. What does that mean?
 - ☐ A Most of it is real letters, sent to particular towns about particular problems
 - ☐ B It was written down years afterwards by people remembering what they had heard
 - ☐ C It is a collection of sermons that a group of scribes wrote down and copied out, but never actually sent to anyone

Romans: the same problem, all the way down

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “Romans: the same problem, all the way down” (Romans 3:19-26), and say Romans 3:23 by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Romans: the same problem, all the way down

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: Romans 3:19-26, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

Rome was the capital of the world, and the church there was mixed. Jews who had grown up with the law, and Gentiles who had grown up with none of it. Each group looked down on the other.

Paul spends three chapters proving one thing to both of them: neither group is winning. The religious people broke the rules they had, and everybody else broke the ones they knew anyway.

Then comes the turn. God offers to put people right with himself as a gift, on the basis of what Jesus did, and the offer is made on identical terms to everybody in the room. That is why the letter exists. Not to make anybody feel worthless, but to knock out the idea that some Christians are better qualified than others.

MEMORY WORK (Romans 3:23):

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. Why would Paul spend so long proving that everybody has failed before he says anything about the rescue?

2. 'Come short' is an archery word. What picture does that give you?
3. Where do you catch yourself keeping score against somebody else?

DO: Draw a target with a line of arrows all falling short, some closer than others, none hitting. Label the arrows with things people are proud of: being polite, going to church, working hard, being clever. Write underneath what Paul says about the distance that is left.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Romans: the same problem, all the way down

1. Who was in the church at Rome?

- ☐ A Jews who had grown up with the law and Gentiles who had grown up with none of it
- ☐ B Only Jews, who had grown up with the law
- ☐ C A group made up only of Roman soldiers and government officials stationed in the capital

2. The memory verse says 'For all have sinned, and come short of' what?

- ☐ A the glory of God
- ☐ B the law of Moses
- ☐ C the promise of heaven

3. Come short is an archery word. What picture does it give?

- ☐ A An arrow landing on the ground before it reaches the target
- ☐ B A rope that is too short to reach all the way around something and tie a proper knot
- ☐ C A person standing shorter than a line marked on a wall

4. What did Paul spend three chapters proving before he said anything about the rescue?

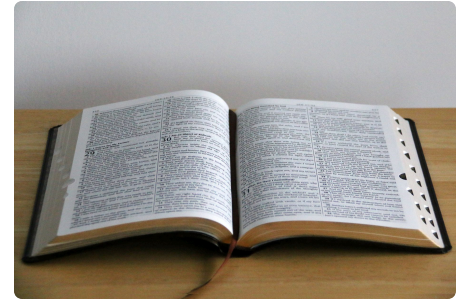
- ☐ A That neither group was winning, because both had broken what they knew
- ☐ B That the Gentiles were ahead of the Jews because they had grown up with so many fewer rules to break in the first place
- ☐ C That the religious group was ahead because they had been given the law

BIBLE · UNIT 1 · LESSON 3

Romans: nothing gets between

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “Romans: nothing gets between” (Romans 8:28-39), and say Romans 8:31 (part) by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Romans: nothing gets between

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: Romans 8:28-39, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

Paul writes this to people who could lose their work, their families or their lives for being Christians. It is not a comfortable poem written on a good day.

He makes a list of everything that might get between a person and God: trouble, hunger, danger, sword, death, angels, the present, the future, height, depth.

Then he says not one item on the list is strong enough.

Verse 28 is often quoted badly. Paul does not say everything that happens is good. He says God works in all of it toward good, which is a different claim and a harder one.

MEMORY WORK (Romans 8:31 (part)):

If God be for us, who can be against us?

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. What is the difference between saying 'this is good' and saying 'God can work good out of this'?
2. Paul lists the things he was personally afraid of. What would be on your list?
3. When something goes wrong this week, which of those two sentences do you want to

DO: Write your own list of the ten things you would least like to lose or face. Copy Paul's sentence across the bottom of the page and keep it somewhere private.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

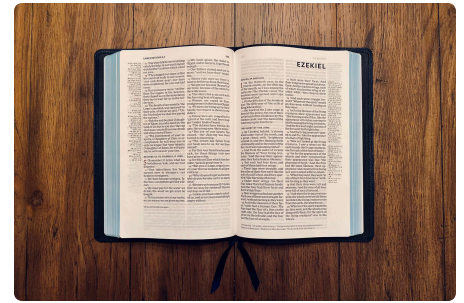
Practice: Romans: nothing gets between

1. What kind of people was Paul writing to in Romans 8?
 - ☐ A Christians who were safe and having a good year
 - ☐ B Christians who could lose their work, their families or their lives
 - ☐ C People scattered across the empire who had never once met a Christian in their entire lives
2. The memory verse asks 'If God be for us,' what?
 - ☐ A who can be against us?
 - ☐ B what shall we fear?
 - ☐ C who shall stand in his way?
3. Paul lists everything that might get between a person and God. What does he then say about the list?
 - ☐ A That not one item on it is strong enough
 - ☐ B That the things on it never happen to Christians
 - ☐ C That the list is too long for anybody to survive
4. The week says verse 28 is often quoted badly. What does Paul actually claim in it?
 - ☐ A That everything which happens is good
 - ☐ B That nothing bad ever happens to Christians
 - ☐ C That God works in all of it toward good

1 Corinthians: a church that picked teams

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “1 Corinthians: a church that picked teams” (1 Corinthians 1:10-17 and 3:1-9), and say 1 Corinthians 3:6 by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: 1 Corinthians: a church that picked teams

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 and 3:1-9, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

Corinth was a port city: rich, loud and rough. The church there had every problem a church can have, and Paul, who started it, was getting reports.

The first problem was teams. People were saying I follow Paul, I follow Apollos, I follow Peter, as if the teachers were rival players and you had to pick a shirt.

Paul refuses to be a team. He points out that he planted and Apollos watered and neither of them made one single thing grow.

It is a farming picture on purpose. Nobody stands over a seed and takes the credit for the sprout.

MEMORY WORK (1 Corinthians 3:6):

I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. Why would people want to belong to a team named after a leader?
2. If planting and watering are not the important part, why does Paul keep doing them?
3. Where do you see teams forming in your own life, and what do you get out of being

DO: Plant a seed in a cup. Water it every day for a week and write one line each day about what you did and what actually happened. At the end, mark which part of the result was yours.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: 1 Corinthians: a church that picked teams

1. What was the first problem Paul takes on in the church at Corinth?
 - ☐ A They had run out of money for their meetings
 - ☐ B Nobody in the city of Corinth would even let the young church meet together in peace
 - ☐ C People had split into teams named after their favorite teacher
2. The memory verse says 'I have planted, Apollos watered; but' what?
 - ☐ A God gave the increase ☐ B we shared the harvest between us
 - ☐ C the field belonged to neither of us
3. Paul answers the team problem with a picture from farming. What is the picture saying?
 - ☐ A The work does not matter, so there is no point doing any of it
 - ☐ B Whoever puts in the most work watering the plant has rightly earned the biggest share of the fruit
 - ☐ C Both men did real work, and neither of them made one thing grow
4. What kind of city was Corinth?
 - ☐ A A port city, rich, loud and rough
 - ☐ B A quiet farming town where everybody knew everybody
 - ☐ C A small village Paul had never visited

BIBLE · UNIT 1 · LESSON 5

1 Corinthians: love is a list of verbs

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “1 Corinthians: love is a list of verbs” (1 Corinthians 13), and say 1 Corinthians 13:13 by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: 1 Corinthians: love is a list of verbs

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: 1 Corinthians 13, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

This chapter gets read at weddings, but Paul wrote it to a church that was arguing about who had the most impressive spiritual gifts.

He says the impressive things are worth nothing without love, and then he defines love almost entirely with verbs: suffers long, is kind, does not envy, is not puffed up, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil.

Charity in the King James is not money. It is the old English word for exactly this kind of love.

The chapter ends by saying the gifts they were fighting over will one day stop, and faith, hope and love will not.

MEMORY WORK (1 Corinthians 13:13):

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. Paul describes love with actions instead of feelings. Why might he do that on purpose?
2. Which line in the chapter would be hardest for you if it were written about you?

3. Where were you unkind this week, and what would that line have looked like instead?

DO: Copy out verses 4 to 7 and replace the word charity with your own name every time it appears. Read it out loud. Underline every line that is not true yet.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: 1 Corinthians: love is a list of verbs

1. This chapter gets read at weddings. What was the church actually arguing about when Paul wrote it?
 - ☐ A Which day of the week they should meet on
 - ☐ B Whose spiritual gifts were the most impressive
 - ☐ C Who in the church should be allowed to get married and under what conditions
2. In the King James, what does the word charity mean in this chapter?
 - ☐ A Love, of exactly the kind the chapter goes on to describe
 - ☐ B Money given to people who are poor
 - ☐ C Being politely courteous to strangers you happen to pass on the street
3. The memory verse says 'faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is' what?
 - ☐ A charity
 - ☐ B hope
 - ☐ C faith
4. How does Paul mostly describe love in this chapter?
 - ☐ A With verbs: things love does and does not do
 - ☐ B With feelings: what love feels like from the inside
 - ☐ C With a list of rules for a wedding day

2 Corinthians: the thorn

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “2 Corinthians: the thorn” (2 Corinthians 12:1-10), and say 2 Corinthians 12:9 (part) by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: 2 Corinthians: the thorn

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

In the second letter Paul is defending himself. Newer teachers in Corinth were more polished speakers than he was, and were saying so loudly.

He answers by bragging about the wrong things: beatings, shipwrecks, hunger, prison, and a problem he calls a thorn in the flesh.

He never says what the thorn was. He says he asked God three times to take it away, and God said no, and told him why.

The answer he got was not that it would clear up soon. It was that grace would be enough, and Paul decided he could live on that.

MEMORY WORK (2 Corinthians 12:9 (part)):

My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. Why would Paul list his failures and injuries instead of his successes?
2. God said no to a reasonable prayer. Does that mean God was not listening?
3. What is something you have asked for more than once and not gotten?

DO: Write down a prayer you have prayed more than three times that has not been answered. Date it, seal it in an envelope, and put it somewhere safe. You will open it in week 36.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: 2 Corinthians: the thorn

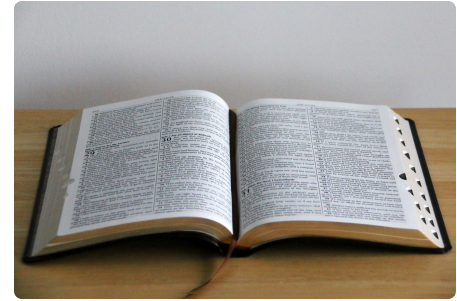
1. How many times did Paul ask God to take the thorn away?
☐ A Every day for the rest of his life ☐ B Three times
☐ C Once, and then he accepted the answer
2. What does the passage tell us the thorn in the flesh was?
☐ A An injury from one of his shipwrecks ☐ B Bad eyesight ☐ C It never says
3. The memory verse says 'My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in' what?
☐ A prayer ☐ B weakness ☐ C patience
4. Newer teachers in Corinth were saying loudly that they spoke better than Paul. What did Paul brag about in reply?
☐ A The large number of new churches he had personally started all across the region
☐ B Beatings, shipwrecks, hunger and prison ☐ C How many languages he could preach in

BIBLE · UNIT 1 · LESSON 7

Galatians: free, and not to waste it

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “Galatians: free, and not to waste it” (Galatians 5:1-15), and say Galatians 5:13 (part) by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Galatians: free, and not to waste it

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: Galatians 5:1-15, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

Galatians is the angriest letter Paul wrote. Teachers had arrived telling these churches that Gentile Christians had to keep the Jewish law to really belong.

Paul's answer is that adding requirements to a gift turns it back into a wage. Either it is earned or it is given. It cannot be both.

Then he heads off the obvious follow-up question. If nothing is required, can you do whatever you like? He says the freedom is for serving each other, not for pleasing yourself.

He warns them that if they keep biting and devouring one another they will finish each other off.

MEMORY WORK (Galatians 5:13 (part)):

by love serve one another.

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. If keeping rules does not save you, why would a Christian keep any of them?
2. Paul says freedom is for serving. How is that different from freedom meaning nobody can tell you what to do?

3. What would you do this week if you were free to do anything at all for somebody else?

DO: Do one job for somebody in the house that nobody assigned to you and nobody will thank you for. Do not mention it. Write one sentence at the end of the week about what it was like not to be noticed.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Galatians: free, and not to waste it

1. What were the new teachers telling the churches in Galatia?
 - ☐ A That Gentile Christians had to keep the Jewish law to really belong
 - ☐ B That they should stop meeting together as a church altogether for good
 - ☐ C That Paul had never actually visited them
2. The memory verse says 'by love' do what 'one another'?
 - ☐ A judge
 - ☐ B serve
 - ☐ C correct
3. Paul says that adding requirements to a gift does something to it. What?
 - ☐ A It turns the gift back into a wage that has to be earned
 - ☐ B It makes the gift bigger for the people who work hardest
 - ☐ C It leaves the gift a gift, as long as the requirements are easy
4. Paul heads off an obvious follow-up question. What is it?
 - ☐ A Whether Paul was really as important a leader as the apostle Peter
 - ☐ B If nothing is required, can you do whatever you like?
 - ☐ C Whether the churches should send money to Jerusalem

Ephesians: one new people

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “Ephesians: one new people” (Ephesians 2:11-22), and say Ephesians 2:14 (part) by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Ephesians: one new people

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: Ephesians 2:11-22, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

The temple in Jerusalem had a wall in it with a sign warning Gentiles not to go past on pain of death. Everybody reading this letter knew that wall.

Paul says Jesus broke it down. Not the stones, the thing the stones stood for.

Two groups who had been kept apart for centuries are now described as one body, one household, and a building God is living in.

Ephesians spends three chapters on what God did and three more on how to behave, in that order. The order is part of the argument.

MEMORY WORK (Ephesians 2:14 (part)):

For he is our peace, who hath made both one.

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. What is a wall people build without any stones?
2. Paul says the two groups became one new thing, not one group joining the other. Why does that difference matter?
3. Who gets left outside at your school, on your team, or in your neighborhood?

DO: Build a small wall out of blocks, books or cardboard, writing on each piece one thing that divides people: money, language, age, team, skin, who your family is. Take it down piece by piece and say out loud what Ephesians claims about each one.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Ephesians: one new people

1. What was the wall in the temple for?
 - ☐ A To keep Gentiles from going any further in, with a sign warning them on pain of death
 - ☐ B To hold up the roof of the temple
 - ☐ C To keep ordinary thieves from breaking in and stealing anything during the quiet hours of the night

2. The memory verse says 'For he is our peace, who hath made' what?
 - ☐ A the wall stand
 - ☐ B both one
 - ☐ C us clean

3. What does Paul say Jesus broke down?
 - ☐ A The actual stones of the temple wall
 - ☐ B What the wall stood for: the separation between the two groups
 - ☐ C The great outer city wall that surrounded the whole of Jerusalem

4. What does Paul say the two groups became?
 - ☐ A Two groups who now agree to leave each other alone
 - ☐ B The Gentiles joined the Jewish group and became like them
 - ☐ C One new people, described as one body and one household

Answer key

Bible

Lesson 1 1. B 2. C 3. B 4. A

Lesson 2 1. A 2. A 3. A 4. A

Lesson 3 1. B 2. A 3. A 4. C

Lesson 4 1. C 2. A 3. C 4. A

Lesson 5 1. B 2. A 3. A 4. A

Lesson 6 1. B 2. C 3. B 4. B

Lesson 7 1. A 2. B 3. A 4. B

Lesson 8 1. A 2. B 3. B 4. C

Unit 1 check-up 1. C 2. B 3. C 4. B 5. A 6. B 7. A 8. B 9. C 10. A 11. C 12. C 13. C 14. B 15. A 16. A

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The same lessons, with a teacher who talks back

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