

Leaders Guide

Living in Jesus

Lessons from
Philippians



Scripture
Union 读经会

SEMENANJUNG MALAYSIA

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Instructions for Leaders/Facilitators

1. This Bible study resource material can be used for school Christian Fellowship meetings, Boys' or Girls' Brigade meetings (during devotional sessions) and even for church youth Bible study groups or cell group meetings.
2. The recommended order of each study is as follows (this order may vary in some of the studies):
 - Opening prayer.
 - Game/Activity.
 - Just for starters questions.
 - Reading through the passage.
 - Looking into the passage.
 - Thinking it through.
 - Responding to God's Word.
 - Digging deeper.
3. Instructions for an ice-breaker, game or activity which can be run usually at the start, or sometimes, half-way through the study are located under the "Game" or "Activity" section.
4. Following that, the "Just For Starters" section contains warm-up or ice-breaker questions which can be discussed within your group/groups. These questions are indirectly linked to the passage to be studied and serve to help the group to "warm-up" before diving into the passage of the Bible they will be studying that day.
5. This is ideally followed by going through the "Recap" section.
6. As leaders, please do read through the Bible passage beforehand and then have a look through the questions. Attempt working through the questions in the Users' Guide

first before referring to the answers and additional notes in this Leaders' Guide.

7. The answers and additional notes on the passage are located in the "Looking into the passage" and "Thinking it through" sections.
8. If there is extra time in the group, you can proceed to the "Digging Deeper" section – which looks at corresponding Bible passages or examines the passage itself more deeply.
9. Do encourage all group members to participate in answering questions and to fill in the answers in the Users' Guide if possible.

Lesson 1: Identity in Christ (Philippians 1:1-6)

1. Opening prayer

2. Game: Adjectives Charades

Suitable for small/medium size groups (8-20 persons).

Materials needed:

- Two decks of cards with various adjectives written on them (e.g. Tall, Rich, Sophisticated, Loyal).
- Stopwatch/timer.
- Pencil and paper to write down scores.

Instructions:

- Divide the students into 2 teams.
- Each team is given a deck of cards with the various adjectives written on each card.
- Ask each team to send a representative.
- At the start of the game, each representative draws a card from the deck.
- He/she must act out the description written on the card. (Speaking is prohibited.)
- The team must try guessing what the answer is.
- If they guess correctly, the representative can proceed to draw a second card.
- If they are unable to guess the answer after a while, the representative can put the card aside and draw another one.
- The team will continue guessing until time runs out. (You could allocate 2 minutes for each team.)
- At the end of each round, scores are given based on the number of cards the team has guessed the answers to correctly.
- A few rounds can be played with different members of each team taking turns to be representatives for their respective groups.

Objective of the game:

Just as people use various adjectives to describe themselves and others, we will be finding out more about who we are in Christ in the first two verses of Philippians.

3. Just for starters question:

Get your students into small groups and get them to think through the following questions about their identity, i.e. 2 words they would use to describe themselves and one interesting fact about themselves. This will help them think about their identity in general.

4. Introducing Philippians:

Discuss the questions with your students

Who wrote the book of Philippians? The Apostle Paul. (Philippians 1:1). But who exactly was he? The book of Acts tells us that Apostle Paul was formerly a persecutor of God's church, but an encounter with Jesus resulted in Paul's conversion, and subsequently, he was sent by God to be the Apostle to the Gentiles (non-Jews).

What kind of writing is Philippians? Well, it's a letter, which the Apostle Paul wrote to a group of Christians in a place called Philippi.

When Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians, he was in prison for preaching about Jesus.

The tone of the letter shows us that Paul had a close relationship with the Christians in Philippi and although he was not with them, he writes to them to encourage them to stand firm in Christ.

5. Reading the passage: Philippians 1:1-6

Read the passage aloud together

6. Looking into the passage:

Q1. Who is the writer of this letter? (v1)

The Apostle Paul

Q2. How does the writer introduce himself and his ministry companion? What do you think this means? (v1)

He introduces them as **servants/slaves of Christ Jesus.**

This means that they **belong to Jesus.**

Q3. Who are the recipients of this letter?

The Philippians

Q4. How does the writer describe them? What does this mean? (v1)

He describes them as **saints in Christ Jesus.**

This means that **they have been made holy, set apart for God's purposes.**

Q5. How does the writer feel towards the recipients of this letter? (vv3-5)

He **remembers** them with **thanksgiving** to God.

He **prays** for them with **joy.**

Q6. Why does the writer pray for his recipients with joy? How does he see himself in relation to them? (vv4-5)

He sees them as **partners in the Gospel.**

Q7. What is the writer confident about? (v6)

He is confident that God who **began** a good work in them will bring it to **completion** on the day of Jesus Christ.

7. Thinking it through:

Discuss and think through the following points with your students:

- At the start of the letter, the Apostle Paul describes both himself and his ministry companion, Timothy as servants/slaves of Jesus Christ.
- Most of the time, the word “slave” brings negative connotations along with it.
- However, being a slave of Christ is a great thing – it means that we belong to the best master in the world ever, Jesus!
- The Bible tells us that all of us were once slaves to sin (Romans 6:20-23).
- We had rejected and rebelled against God who is the rightful King of all Creation.
- We were destined for judgment – eternal death and separation from God.
- But God in His love sent Jesus to die on the cross for us. On the cross, Jesus paid the penalty for our sins. He paid the price for our sins with His own sinless, perfect life. He died in our place and 3 days later rose to life again.
- Hence, Jesus has redeemed us! He has bought us back, and we belong to Him!
- If we are trusting in Jesus, then we are slaves of Christ, and hence, we should be living under Jesus as our rightful King, serving Him.

- Paul also greets the Christians in Philippi as saints of Christ.
- Now, we often think of saints as extra holy people, with halos on their heads – but the word “saints” simply means “holy ones”. And this includes everyone who trusts in Jesus! We have been made holy by Jesus’ blood, and set apart for His purposes – to live for Him and Him alone.
- Are you a slave and saint of Christ Jesus? Do your thoughts, words and actions reflect the fact that you belong to Him?

- Paul remembered the Philippians and thanked God for them because they were his partners in the Gospel.
- Whenever he prayed for them, he prayed with joy! Paul was not physically with or near to them when he wrote the letter but together they shared a common trust in Jesus and a common goal: to serve Him.
- And Paul was confident that even if he wasn't able to be with them in person, God would finish the good work he had started in them, that is, God would keep enabling them to grow in trusting, knowing and loving Jesus, all the way to the end!
- Do you have a Gospel partner(s)? Have you stopped to thank God for them? Have you taken the time to pray for them?

8. Responding to God's Word:

Take some time to pray together in response to God's Word as a group

You may like to pray according to the following points:

- a) Thank God for giving us who trust in Jesus a special identity in Him.*
- b) Pray that God will help us to live out our lives as slaves and saints of Jesus.*
- c) Pray that God will enable us to live lives that are holy, lives which show that we belong to Jesus*
- d) Thank God for giving us partners in the Gospel. (If you have a Gospel partner(s), do write a prayer, giving thanks to God for him/her or them.)*

9. Digging deeper:

Get the students to read Ephesians 2:1-10 together.

- In this Bible passage, the Apostle Paul describes those who were once without Christ as being dead in sins and transgressions.
- We were separated from the life-giver who is God himself, and we were destined to face His righteous and just anger.
- We could not by our own ability save ourselves in any way.
- But by God's grace, that is his undeserved kindness to us, we have been saved through faith in Jesus.
- We have been made alive in Christ, given a new identity!
- By trusting in Jesus' sacrificial death for us, we have salvation and the amazing part is this: All of it is a gift from God.
- There is nothing we could do to earn our salvation.
- And we have a new purpose! We have been saved to do the good works God has prepared for us to do. All this is in response to what God has done for us in Jesus!
- Isn't it indeed a great and wonderful privilege – to be able to live for and serve the living God?

10. Closing prayer

Lesson 2: Partnership in the Gospel (Philippians 1:7-11)

1. Opening prayer

2. Game: Get up!

Suitable for small or medium groups

Instructions:

- Students are asked to pair up and sit back to back, with their arms interlocked with each other.
- On the count of 3, each pair must try to stand up as quickly as possible.
- This game can be repeated by increasing the students in a group (3 to 5 persons, and finally to the whole group).

Objective of the game:

This game helps students to think about how they are to work together in partnership, which leads naturally into the lesson about Gospel partnership.

3. Just for starters question

In your groups, ask your students to discuss which they think is easier, working alone or in partnership. Why? Ask them also, what they think are the traits which make a good partner.

4. Recap on Philippians 1:1-6

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt the previous lesson.

5. Reading the passage: Philippians 1:7-11

Read the passage aloud together

6. Looking into the passage:

The Apostle Paul thanks God whenever he remembers the Philippians because he considers them to be partners in the Gospel (vv3-6).

Q1. Why does Paul relate to the Philippians in this way? (v7)

They are **partakers with him of God's grace.**

Q2. How does Paul feel about them? (v8)

He yearns for them with the **affection of Christ Jesus.**

Q3. As a partner in the Gospel, what does Paul do for the Philippians? (v9)

He **prays** for them.

Q4. What are some of the things Paul prays for with regards to the Philippians? (vv9-11)

He prays that they will grow in **godliness**, to the glory and praise of God.

7. Thinking it through:

Get the students into groups to think through what Gospel partnership is all about.

- Paul considered the Philippians as partners in the Gospel.
- This means that both Paul and the Philippians trust in the Gospel, the Good News that Jesus died for their sins and rose again giving eternal life to all who trust in Him. Even though Paul was far away from the Philippians, he knew that both he and the Philippians were also working together for the Gospel! They were serving the same King, Jesus!
- This partnership that Paul shared with them came about because they were partakers of God's grace. That is, they all shared in God's undeserved kindness together, shown through what Jesus did on the cross. There was no superiority in this partnership, as both Paul and the Philippians were undeserving sinners saved by God!

- Paul also had a Christ-like love for the Philippians, which made him yearn for them and he kept them in prayer – praying that their love for God and one another would continue to grow, even as they grew in their knowledge and discernment, so that they would be able to live lives which were godly – pure and blameless till Jesus comes again.
- How about us? Is there anyone whom we can consider our Gospel partners? How do we serve Jesus together? Do we take time to thank God for our Gospel partners? Do we seek to help each other grow to love Jesus more? These are most definitely questions worth pondering over!

8. Responding to God’s Word:

Take some time to respond to God’s Word by praying together.

You may like to pray according to the following points:

- a) Thank God for the privilege we have to be partnering in the Gospel with our brothers and sisters in Christ.*
- b) Pray that God will help us to build and foster meaningful Gospel partnerships which will help us serve Him and His people.*
- c) Pray that God will help us to abound in our love for Him, for one another as well grow in godliness together.*

9. Digging deeper: Read Philippians 1:3-11 again.

- The Apostle Paul and his Gospel partners, the Philippians, are partakers of God' grace – this meant that they share in God's grace together.
- If grace means undeserved kindness that God has shown to us, then this would mean that none of us should take pride or boast in our abilities, or look down and demean others who might not possess the same skills as we do. After all, we are God's people solely by His grace.
- So, whether we serve God upfront or behind-the-scenes we must always remember that we are playing equally important roles as partners in the Gospel.
- Gospel partners love one another with a Christ-like love. Do we truly love our brothers and sisters in Christ? If this is the case, how can we be expressing our love to one another? The Bible does tell us that if we claim to love God, we should also love one another.
- And do we take time to pray for one another? – Or are we wrapped up and concerned with our own needs?
- Perhaps what we can start to do is ask a Gospel partner how we can be praying for them. Of all the things that we can be praying for one another the most important thing is for all of us to grow together in godliness. If you haven't thought of doing so before, today might be a good day to start!

10. Closing Prayer

Lesson 3: Proclaiming Christ (Philippians 1:12-18a)

1. Opening prayer

2. Game: Whisper-down-the-lane

Suitable for medium or large groups.

Instructions:

- Students are asked to sit in a straight line facing the same direction.
- A secret message is whispered to the first person in line, only once.
- That person must whisper what he/she has heard to the next person, who will then pass the message on to the next person.
- The last person at the end of the line must reveal what he/she heard to the group. The message can then be compared to the original one.

Objective of the game:

This game helps students to think about the task of telling or passing on an important message, which leads into the lesson's subject: proclaiming the Gospel.

3. Just for starters question

In your groups, ask your students to share if they have ever had to pass on an important message to someone. What was that message all about? What did they do to ensure that the message was conveyed? Did the person get the message in the end?

4. Recap on Philippians 1:7-11

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt the previous lesson.

5. Reading the passage: Philippians 1:12-18a

Read the passage aloud together

6. Looking into the passage:

Q1. What does Paul tell the Philippians about his imprisonment? (vv12-13)

Paul tells them that his imprisonment has really served to **advance the Gospel**.

The whole imperial guard and all the rest knew that Paul was in prison because of **Christ**.

Q2. What was the result of the news of Paul's imprisonment for the Gospel being known? (v14)

Most of the brothers (Christians), were much more **bold to speak the word without fear**.

Q3. There were 2 groups of people who were preaching Christ. What were their motives? (vv15-17)

The first group preached Christ out of **selfish ambition**, envy and rivalry to **afflict** Paul in prison.

The second preached Christ out of **love**, knowing that Paul was in prison for the **defense** of the Gospel.

Q4. What is Paul's response to both these groups who were preaching Christ? Why? (v18a)

Paul **rejoices** because either way, Christ is **proclaimed**.

7. Thinking it through:

In groups, ask the students to discuss what they have just read from the passage.

- Paul tells the Philippians that he can rejoice, while in prison! That may seem like a really strange thing to say, isn't it?
- Well, that's because Paul's imprisonment had caused word to spread, throughout the imperial guard and beyond that he was in prison because of Christ. More and more Christians

who knew about this became bolder to share the Gospel with those around them.

- However, not everyone was doing so for the right reason. Paul knew of some who were jealous of him, perhaps because Paul was more popular or had a bigger following. This group sought to make Paul's life in prison more difficult – by telling others about the Gospel.
- The second group however, were proclaiming Christ out of love, knowing that Paul was in prison for the sake of the Gospel.
- What was Paul's response? – Either way, for whatever motive, he rejoiced! That was because to Paul, the most important thing was that more people got to hear about Jesus.
- What about us? Is sharing the Gospel to others of any importance to us? Does fear hold us back? Perhaps we are afraid that our family members, friends or other people will get upset or angry with us? Maybe we're not too sure how we can begin to share this news with others. Maybe we just haven't tried yet!
- Let us pray for God's wisdom and strength to enable us to proclaim Christ, just like the Apostle Paul did.

8. **Responding to God's Word:**

Take time to respond to God's Word by praying together.

You may like to pray according to the following points:

- a) Thank God for the Gospel he has given to us.*
- b) Pray that God will help us to understand the Gospel message better and be able to share it with our family and friends.*
- c) Pray that God will give us boldness to proclaim the Good News of Jesus to those who need to hear it.*

9. Digging deeper:

Read Colossians 4:2-6

- Prayer is an essential part when it comes to sharing the Gospel with others. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Colossae to ask them to pray that God would open doors of opportunity for them to share Christ with others. He also asked them to pray that he would share it clearly and correctly.
- Paul also tells the Christians in Colossae to walk/live wisely, amongst outsiders, that is, those who are not Christians. They were to make the most of the time, to be witnesses for Jesus to those who have not yet trusted in him. They were also to watch their speech, so that they would get the chance to tell others about Jesus.

10. Closing Prayer

Lesson 4: The Reason for Living and Dying (Philippians 1:18b-26)

1. Opening prayer

2. Game: 2 Truths and a Lie

Suitable for small, medium or large groups

Instructions:

- Students are asked to sit in a circle in a group(s).
- Each person takes turns to share 3 statements about himself/herself, with regards to anything about his/her life with the other group members – 2 of these statements must be true and 1 is a lie.
- The group members must then proceed to guess which of the 3 statements is a lie.
- Each person in the group takes turns to do so until everyone has had their turn.

Objective of the game:

This game helps students to think about their lives, their experiences, motivations, etc. and perhaps, what they have been living for.

3. Just for starters question

To live is _____, to die is _____. Ask your students to take turns in completing this sentence with their own thoughts and words.

4. Recap on Philippians 1:12-18a

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt the previous lesson.

5. Reading the passage: Philippians 1:18b-26.

Read the passage aloud together.

6. Looking into the passage:

Paul tells the Philippians that he can rejoice even while he is in prison for the Gospel (v18).

Q1. What is Paul's expectation and hope while in prison? (v20)

It is that he will not be **ashamed**, but as always with full courage, **Christ** would be **honoured in his body**, whether by life or by death

Q2. What was Paul's motivation for living and dying? (v21)

For Paul, to live is **Christ** and to die is **gain**.

Q3. Between living and dying, which was Paul's preference at that time, and why? (vv22-23)

Paul's desire was to **depart and be with Christ, which was far better**.

Q4. What in the end influenced Paul's mindset on life and death? (vv24-26)

Paul knew that if he continued living, he would be able to **serve** the Philippians, for their progress and joy in the **faith**.

Hence, he would **remain** and **continue** with all of them.

7. Thinking it through:

In groups, ask the students to discuss what they have just read from the passage.

- For Paul, his reason for living was for Jesus. And even if he had to die, he wasn't afraid, for to die was gain – He would be with Jesus, his King and Lord. What is your reason for living? Are you afraid of death? Are you prepared to die? Which would you choose if you were in Paul's situation – life or death? Let us re-examine our hearts and the reason for which we live. Let us ask God for help to live only for Jesus, and to know that there is no fear in death, for all who trust in Jesus have eternal life.

- Most of us would never have been in a life or death situation. Most of us would choose living over dying. But not for Paul. Being in prison because of the Gospel meant suffering. And Paul had suffered much for Jesus. Dying seemed like a better option for Paul as he would be with Jesus. And yet, even in life or death, Paul sought to bring honour to Jesus. He made it his aim to make Jesus known. Hence, in living, Paul knew he would be able to continue serving the Philippians and the other Christians. He would be able to be part of their progress in the faith. He would be able to continue sharing the Gospel with others. This motivated Paul's thoughts on life and death. To Paul, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
- What about us? What is our reason for living? If death should come suddenly to us, will we be prepared to face it? Let us pray that God will help us to live for Christ, and to know that there is no fear in death, for all who trust in Jesus have eternal life.

8. Responding to God's Word:

Take some time to respond to God's Word by praying together.

You may like to pray according to the following points:

- a) Thank God for the life he has given to us in Christ Jesus.*
- b) Pray that God will help us to live for Jesus, in our thoughts, words and deeds*
- c) Pray that we will continue to be confident in life and in death, knowing that to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

9. Digging deeper:

Read Hebrews 12:1-3 together

- The Christian life is like a race. What should our eyes be fixed on as we run this earthly race? What should be our reason and motivation for running this race?

- The writer of Hebrews tells us that all of us who are God's people by faith in Jesus should run this earthly race with our eyes fixed on Jesus, who is the author and perfecter of our faith. Let us keep in mind the cross on which he died, bearing our sins, despising its shame, being raised to life and is now seated at God's right hand. Looking to Jesus, gives us the strength we need to live lives which are godly and pleasing to him.

10. Closing Prayer

Lesson 5- Striving together for the Gospel (The Gospel worthy life) (Philippians 1:27-30)

1. Opening prayer

2. Game: Work-together-tasks

Suitable for small, medium or large-sized groups

Instructions:

- Students stand in a straight line, side by side with their arms inter-linked with one another.
- The game master shouts out a task that the group must accomplish together. (E.g. Move 10 steps forward (or backwards), Move 6 steps forward while hopping on your right leg only)
- The instructions can be given with increasing difficulty.

Objective of the game:

This game helps students to think about working together for a common cause, and this leads to the study's emphasis on striving side-by-side to live a Gospel-worthy life.

3. Just for starters question

Think of an instance where you had to work together as a team. What was the goal to be achieved when working together? What were the challenges you all faced?

Get the students to recall and share instances where they had to work together as a team to accomplish or complete a task. Ask them to share what some of the challenges were during that time.

4. Recap on Philippians 1:18b-26

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt the previous lesson.

5. Reading the passage: Philippians 1:27-30

Read the passage aloud together.

6. Looking into the passage:

Q1. What does Paul tell the Philippians about the way they should live as followers of Christ? (v27a)

He tells them that their manner of life should be **worthy of the gospel of Christ.**

Q2. How does a Gospel-worthy life look like, according to Paul? (v27b-28)

It involves **standing firm** with one spirit, with one mind, **striving side by side** for the faith of the **gospel.**

It also means not being **frightened** in anything by those who are **opponents** of the Christian faith.

Q3. As the Christians in Philippi are united and striving for the Gospel, what is this a sign of? (v28)

It is a sign of **destruction** for the opponents of the Christian faith, and a sign of **salvation** for the Philippians.

Q4. What should the Philippians be prepared to face even as they strive together to live a Gospel-worthy life? (vv29-30)

They should recognize that it has been granted to them not just to **believe** in Jesus, but also to **suffer for his sake.**

7. Thinking it through:

In groups, ask the students to discuss what they have just read from the passage.

- Paul wrote to the Philippians about living a life worthy of the Gospel. How would that look like? Well, Paul explained that it would involve them being united in spirit and mind, with a goal to live for the Gospel. And as they strive, side by side

together, they were not to be afraid of their opponents, those who were against the Christian faith. Even as they stood together, united by their faith in Jesus, those who oppose them would come to recognize the strength by which they live for the Gospel being from God, and hence, those who continue to oppose them would be destined for eternal destruction. Meanwhile, for the Philippians themselves, it would serve as a reminder that they were God's people, saved by his grace. Life wasn't going to be easy for the Philippians. They were to be prepared to suffer for the sake of the Gospel, just like Paul himself.

- What about us? Are we united together as believers, striving to live a life worthy of the Gospel? Are we courageously standing up together for Jesus? If we are to expect hardships and suffering for the sake of Jesus, are we prepared to face these challenges together as followers of Jesus? Let us pray for the strength to strive together to live lives that bring honour and glory to Christ.

8. Responding to God's Word:

Take some time to respond to God's Word by praying together.

You may like to pray according to the following points:

- a) Thank God for the fellowship that we have amongst our fellow believers in the Gospel.*
- b) Pray that God will enable us to live a life worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*
- c) Pray that we will be united, striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel.*

9. Digging deeper:

Read 1 Peter 2:9-12 together.

The Apostle Peter wrote to the Christians during his time, telling them their identity in Jesus. Quoting from the Old Testament scriptures, he reminded them that they were a people chosen by God and set apart to live for him. God had shown them mercy by calling them out of darkness into his marvellous light. Hence, in response to this, they were to live godly and honourable lives, as faithful witnesses of Christ, especially in the face of those who oppose them so that due glory and recognition would be given to God on the day he returns.

10. Closing Prayer

Lesson 6 - Jesus: The Perfect Example (Philippians 2:1-11)

1. Opening prayer

2. Game: Follow me!

Suitable for medium or large-sized groups

Instructions:

- Students are to sit together in a circle.
- One person is assigned as the “leader” of the group. He/she is the one who will be leading the rest of the group in a series of action sequences.
- At the start of the game, the leader will perform an action (e.g. clapping his/her hands, pulling his/her ears).
- After the leader has performed this action, the person seated next to him/her, on the right-hand side must mimic the leader’s action. This will be followed in turn by the person seated next to this person and the next and so forth.
- The leader must keep coming up with new actions which will be followed in sequence by the first person on his right, the person next to him/her and so forth.

Objective of the game:

This game’s concept helps students think about following the actions or examples of a leader, which leads into the study’s emphasis on following the example of Jesus.

3. Just for starters question

Think of someone (e.g. a leader, celebrity, athlete) whom you respect and admire. Do you learn from his/her life? Do you strive to follow his/her example? Share this with your group members.

Ask the students to think of someone they respect or admire. What is it that makes this person’s life outstanding? How does

this person impact them personally? Do they seek to follow this person's example?

4. Recap on Philippians 1:27-30

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt the previous lesson.

5. Reading the passage: Philippians 2:1-11

Read the passage aloud together.

6. Looking into the passage:

Q1. Look at v1, what is Paul's description of those who are followers of Jesus?

They have **encouragement** in Christ

They find **comfort** in God's **love**

They are participants in the **Spirit**

They have **affection** and **sympathy** for each other

Q2. If the Philippians are those who follow Jesus, what does Paul emphasize should be their focus? (v2)

They should be **partners** in the Gospel, being of the same **mind**, having the same **love**, being in **full accord** and of one mind.

Q3. How does unity in the Gospel and love look like? (vv3-4)

They are to do nothing from **selfish ambition** or **conceit**, but in **humility** count others more **significant** than yourselves.

Each of them look not only to his own interests, but **also to the interests of others**.

Q4. What mindset should the Philippians have as they seek to do so? Whose example should they follow? (v5)

They should follow the example of **Jesus Christ**

Q5. Summarize from vv6-11 the example that Christ left for all who trust and follow him.

Even though Jesus was **God**, he **emptied** himself, taking on the form of a **servant**, by **being born as a human**.

As a human, he **humbled** himself by being **obedient** to the point of **death on a cross**.

Hence, God has **exalted** Jesus by giving him the highest place of **honour**, that everyone will acknowledge him as **Lord** to the glory of God the Father.

7. Thinking it through:

In groups, ask the students to discuss what they have just read from the passage.

- In this passage, Paul quotes what is thought to be the words of what is believed to be an early Christian hymn when he reminds the Philippians about the example Jesus had left them and all believers throughout the ages to follow.
- Jesus' humility, in emptying himself of his glory and being born as a human, dying on the cross for the sins of mankind in obedience to the Father resulted in his exaltation. One day, everyone will acknowledge his Lordship overall.
- If the Philippians were followers of Jesus, then they too, should seek the interest of their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, seeking to show the same Christ-like love to one another.
- What about us? Who is our ultimate example? Is it Jesus, or someone else? Heeding the words of the Apostle Paul, we are reminded to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, even as we seek to live in service to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

8. Responding to God's Word:

Take some time to respond to God's Word by praying together.

You may like to pray according to the following points:

- a) Thank God for Jesus, our ultimate example, our King and Lord.*
- b) Pray that God will help us to follow Jesus' example and walk in his footsteps.*
- c) Pray that God will help us be like Jesus, in loving and serving our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.*

9. Digging deeper:

Read John 13:34-35 together.

Jesus' new commandment to his disciples and to us today is to love one another. What kind of love would that be? It would be the same kind of love by which Jesus had loved them, and us. The same kind of sacrificial, self-giving love which cost him his very life so that through his death we might live. And as the world sees us loving each other with the same kind of love, they will recognize us as being Jesus' disciples.

10. Closing Prayer

Lesson 7: Shining as Lights in the World (Philippians 2:12-18)

1. Opening prayer

2. Activity: Shine like the stars

Materials needed:

- Pieces of paper, scissors, pencils

Instructions:

- Students are each given a piece of paper and asked to draw a cut-out star on it.
- They can proceed to cut these stars with scissors and write their names on it. (They can decorate it too)
- At the end of the lesson, they can write what they have learnt about shining as lights in the world.

Objective of this activity:

This activity can serve to reinforce what has been taught in this lesson about shining as lights in the world.

3. Just for starters question

Get your students to think about characteristics which would make a person stand out in a crowd. Then, get them to think about characteristics which make a group of people stand out as well.

4. Recap on Philippians 2:1-11

Go through the truths learnt in the previous lesson with your students.

5. Reading the passage: Philippians 2:12-18

Read through the passage as a group, together.

6. Looking into the passage:

Previously in Philippians 2:1-11, the Apostle Paul pointed to Jesus as the ultimate example of humility which the Philippians should follow even as they stood united in Christ and the Gospel.

Q1. What does Paul ask the Philippians to do now that he is not with them? Who is at work in the Philippians as they seek to do so? (vv12-13)

They are to work out their own **salvation with fear and trembling**

For it is **God** who is at work in them to will and work for his good pleasure.

Q2. What would it look like for the Philippians to work out their salvation? (vv14-16)

They were to do **all things without disputing (fighting) or grumbling, shining as lights in a world that is sinful, holding on to the word of life.**

Q3. How does Paul feel about being “poured out as a drink offering” in service to God’s people, the Philippians? (vv17-18)

He **rejoices** and he also bids them to **be glad and rejoice** with him.

7. Thinking it through:

- Paul urges the Philippians to follow the ultimate example of humility that is Jesus himself, who became a human being and was obedient to death on a cross, and is now exalted. This was to be the basis of unity in the Gospel amongst the Philippians. (Philippians 2:1-11)

- In response to this, Paul tells the Philippians they are to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. Now, this doesn't mean that they are to do good works to earn their salvation, but rather, they should recognize God as the all-powerful and righteous King and seek to live out their identity as God's people whom He has saved. They are to be who they truly are in Christ.
- But at the same time, God is working in them to enable them to live lives that please Him!
How were they to do this? – They were to shine as lights in a dark and sinful world by doing everything without grumbling or disputing. (Paul uses these words which are reminiscent of the Israelites in the Old Testament who grumbled in the wilderness, and are also described as a “twisted and crooked generation” (Deuteronomy 32:5).
They are also to hold onto the Gospel.
- What about us? – As brothers and sisters in Christ, are we united in our service of Him? Or do we fight and squabble over the smallest of issues?
- Are we seeking to hold onto the word of life – the Gospel? We can do so by reminding ourselves of this message in the songs we sing, when studying the Bible and even in our conversations.
- As God's people, we are called to shine as lights in the world.

8. Responding to God's Word:

Group prayer time

You may like to pray along the lines of some of these points:

- a) Thank God for His grace and mercy in saving us by His grace through Jesus' work on the cross*
- b) Pray that God will help us to respond rightly by working out our salvation with fear and trembling*
- c) Pray that we will seek to serve Him as one, holding fast to the Word of life, the Gospel.*

9. Digging deeper:

Get the students to read 1 Peter 1:1-12 together

- When Peter writes to the Christians of his time, he calls them “elect exiles” (v1). This means God’s people are chosen by God, but are living as exiles in this world. They are looking forward to their true home.
- Life on this earth as elect exiles isn’t easy. They may suffer trials of various kinds because of their faith in Jesus (v6). But in these sufferings, they can rejoice even while they grieve as they look forward to the day Jesus returns (v7).
- The hope of the eternal inheritance they will have when Jesus returns again is a living hope. This hope is living because Jesus rose again and lives forever (vv3-5).

10. Closing Prayer

Lesson 8: Two Good Men (Philippians 2:19-30)

1. Opening prayer

2. Activity: The hall of fame

Materials needed:

- Pictures of famous individuals (A4 size or larger)

Instructions:

- Prepare printed pictures of famous individuals (celebrities, sportsmen, politicians)
- Divide your students into groups or pairs. Each group/pair is given 1 picture.
- In their groups/pairs, ask them to list out any information that they know about these individuals (name, country of origin, characteristics, abilities)
- After some discussion, encourage them to share what they have listed out with everyone.

Objective of this activity:

This activity is a precursor to the lesson. Just as the students thought about the characteristics of the individuals they had been given, they will now examine two godly characters from today's lesson.

3. Just for starters question

Get your students to think through all the famous individuals they've seen in the pictures just now and discuss which they think are good examples and why.

4. Recap on Philippians 2:12-18

Go through the truths learnt in the previous lesson with your students.

5. Reading the passage: Philippians 2:19-20

Read through the passage as a group, together.

6. Looking into the passage:

Q1. Who are the two men whom Paul writes to the Philippians about? (vv19, 25)

Timothy and Epaphroditus

Q2. Based on vv19-30, complete the table below:

	Timothy	Epaphroditus
Affiliation to Paul	He has a <u>father-son</u> relationship with Paul and has <u>served</u> with him in the <u>gospel</u> . (v22)	Paul describes him as a <u>brother</u> and <u>fellow worker</u> and <u>fellow soldier</u> in Christ (v25)
Affiliation to the Philippians	Paul hopes to <u>send</u> Timothy to get <u>news</u> about the Philippians before he himself comes. (vv19, 23-24)	He was <u>sent by</u> the Philippians as <u>messenger</u> and <u>minister</u> to Paul's need. (v25)
Character/Mindset	Timothy is <u>genuinely concerned</u> for the <u>welfare</u> of the Philippians (v20) He has <u>proven his worth</u> while serving alongside Paul (v22)	Epaphroditus <u>risked his life</u> to serve Paul. He fell ill to the point of <u>death</u> , but God had mercy on him and he recovered. (v25-30) He has been <u>longing</u> for the Philippians and has been <u>distressed</u> because he heard

		<p>that he was ill. Hence, Paul hopes to send him back to the Philippians (v25-26).</p>
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Q3. According to Paul, how should the Philippians receive godly men like Epaphroditus (and Timothy)? (v29)

They should **receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men**

7. Thinking it through:

Get the students to discuss the truths they have learnt from Scripture together.

- Paul had two godly men he wrote to the Philippians about: Timothy and Epaphroditus.
- While Timothy was someone whom Paul hoped to send in service to the Philippians, Epaphroditus had been sent by the Philippians to minister to Paul's need even as he was in prison.
- Timothy had a proven track-record of godly and faithful service, even as he served alongside Paul. Paul in fact treated him like a son.
- Epaphroditus had served Paul sacrificially, almost losing his life to illness in the process. And when he heard that the Philippians who had sent him were worried, he was in turned distressed, not for himself, but for them!
- Both these men displayed Christ-like love and sacrificial service to their brothers in the faith and Paul tells them to receive men like Epaphroditus (and Timothy) in the Lord with all joy and honour men like them!
- These two men are godly examples which we should be seeking to imitate in our service to Christ and to others.

8. Responding to God's Word:

Group prayer time

You may like to pray along the lines of some of these points:

- a) Thank God for godly examples such as Timothy and Epaphroditus given in Scripture to teach us and build us in the faith.*
- b) Pray that God will help us to be Christ-like and sacrificial in our service to our brothers and sisters in Christ.*
- c) Pray that we will seek to honour and appreciate our brothers and sisters whom we serve sacrificially amongst us.*

9. Digging deeper:

Get the students to read and think through Philippians 2:19-30 again.

- Sacrificial, Christ-like service. These were distinctive features of Timothy and Epaphroditus' service. They were also faithful in carrying out the task which had been sent before them (indeed, for Epaphroditus, it nearly cost him his own life!). And most of all, they served out of a sense of genuine love, care and concern for their fellow believers.
- How about us? Is our service to Christ and to our brothers and sisters motivated by genuine love and concern for them? Or do we just do what we do grudgingly, or out of a sense of duty or obligation.
- Very often, we tend to take those who serve sacrificially amongst us for granted too. Perhaps we should think of ways to express our thanks and appreciation for their tireless work and service to Christ which they carry out amongst us. Ask God to help us to begin to do so, starting today!

10. Closing Prayer

Lesson 9: What matters most: Righteousness through faith in Jesus (Philippians 3:1-11)

1. Opening prayer

2. Game: Guess the value!

Materials needed:

- A list of expensive items which people will consider modern day “treasures” together with how much they are worth (e.g. the latest Nike sports shoes, Prada handbag, mobile phone).
Note: You can look up the prices of these from the internet.
- Blank pieces of A4 papers, marker pens.

Instructions:

- Divide the students into groups
- Each group is given several pieces of A4 paper and a marker pen.
- At the start of the game, read out the first item on the modern day “treasures” list you have made. (If you have power point slides with pictures of these items, that would be good as well!)
- Ask the groups to discuss and write down how much they think that item is worth on a piece of A4 paper.
- After a few minutes, each group must display the price answers they have written on the A4 paper.
- The group with the closest estimate to the real value of this item scores a point.
- This is repeated for several rounds until you have finished with the list.
- The group with the highest score wins.

Objective of the game:

Just as different items have different value, Paul writes to the Philippians of what is of highest value to him, that he would consider all other things as loss in this lesson.

3. Just for starters question

In a group(s), ask the students to name some of the things which they think are very important in life and explain why these things are important to them.

4. Recap on Philippians 2: 19-30

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt the previous lesson.

5. Reading through the passage: Philippians 3:1-11

Get the students to read Philippians 3:1-11 together.

6. Looking into the passage:

Q1. Paul gives the Philippians an exhortation and a warning. What are they? (v1-2)

He tells them to **rejoice** in the **Lord**.

He also tells them to beware of **false teachers** who were teaching that believers needed to be **circumcised** in order to be **God's people**.

Extra notes: These false teachers were called Judaizers who taught that trusting in Jesus for salvation was not enough, but one had to become "a Jew" by obeying Jewish laws and customs to be accepted by God.

Q2. What does Paul say about those who are truly God's people? (v3)

They put no confidence in the **flesh**.

Q3. Paul used to put his confidence in his past status and achievements, but what does he think of them now? (vv 4-7)

Whatever **gain** Paul had he now considers as **loss**.

Q4. Why does he think in this way? (vv8-10)

Paul considers all these things **rubbish** so that he might gain **Christ**, as it is only through **faith in Jesus** that one can be counted **righteous** before God, not through any other means.

Q5. What is Paul's desire? (vv11-12)

That he might know the **power** of Jesus' resurrection, sharing in His **suffering** and becoming like Him in His **death**, so that Paul will be raised on the last day.

7. Thinking it through:

Get the students into groups to discuss the following:

- Paul tells the Philippians that their source of joy should always be in the Lord.
- There were false teachers going around teaching that in order to be acceptable to God, one had to become like a Jew by following Jewish laws such as being circumcised.
- But Paul stresses that those who are God's people put no confidence in the flesh. In fact, Paul used to think that his religious status and zeal would make him right with God.
- But when he encountered Jesus, he realized that only faith in Jesus could make him righteous.
- Hence, Paul considered all the things in which he took pride in the past as rubbish (The Greek word translates literally as "dung") compared to knowing Jesus.
- In knowing the power of Jesus' resurrection, sharing in His suffering, and dying to his old self, Paul knows that God will accept him and raise him on the last day when Jesus returns.
- How about you? If you died tonight and God asked you, "Why should I let you into heaven?" what would you say?
- Would you start telling God all the things you have done for him? – The truth is that none of these give us a righteous standing with God.

- The answer would simply have to be “Because Jesus died for my sins and rose again defeating sin and death.”

8. Responding to God’s Word:

Group prayer time.

You may like to pray along the lines of some of these points:

- a) Thank God for the righteousness we can have which is found only by trusting in what Jesus has done for us.*
- b) Pray that God will help us never to look to our own works or achievements to be accepted by God.*
- c) Pray that God will give you opportunities in your everyday life- in suffering and ease to bring glory to Him.*

9. Digging deeper:

Get your students to read and think through Philippians 3:1-11 again.

- In his past, Paul counted on his religious standing and status to be counted as righteous before God. How about us? What might we be tempted to rely on for our salvation?
- For some of us as Christians, we may be tempted to make following Jesus a list of things we must do and mustn’t do.
- Some of us might think doing “churchy things” like attending church service regularly, serving in church, reading our bibles and praying in addition to trusting in Jesus are the things which make us right with God.
- Others might think that helping out in charity and trying to be a good person will get us our ticket to heaven.
- However, this bible passage helps us to look back at what God has done for us in Jesus, and how we can only rely on Him alone for our salvation and right standing with God.

10. Closing prayer

Lesson 10: The Ultimate Goal (Philippians 3:12-16)

1. Opening prayer

2. Game: Aim and shoot!

Materials needed:

- A basketball hoop & basketball.

Instructions:

- Divide the students into groups.
- At the start of the game, ask each group to send a representative.
- Each representative will take turns throwing the basketball with the aim of getting the ball through the basketball hoop.
- Make the game more competitive by getting representatives to stand at increasing distances from the basketball hoop for each round.

Objective of the game:

Aiming for the goal - getting the ball through the hoop brings across the concept of Paul's goal in life in today's lesson.

3. Just for starters question

In a group(s), ask the students to think of one short term and one long term goal that they have in life. Ask them also to share the measures they think they'll have to take to achieve these goals.

4. Recap on Philippians 3:1-11

Get the students to recollect the truths they have learnt in the previous lesson.

5. Reading through the passage: Philippians 3:12-16

Get the students to read Philippians 3:12-16 together.

6. Looking into the passage:

In the previous verses, Paul spoke of pressing on until the day Jesus returned and he attained the resurrection from the dead (vv10-11).

Q1. What does Paul tell the Philippians about his current state? (v12a)

He tells them that he has not **obtained** his ultimate goal and is not **perfect** yet.

Q2. What does Paul press on to do? What is the assurance Paul has even as he strives to attain this? (v12b)

He presses on to make this goal of becoming **perfect** like Jesus his own, knowing that Christ Jesus has made him **his own**.

Q3. What does Paul do to achieve this goal? (vv13-14)

He **forgets** what lies **behind**, and he strains **forward** towards the goal for the **prize** of the **upward call of God** in Christ Jesus.

Q4. What does Paul encourage the Philippians to do with regards to this goal? (vv15-16)

He encourages those of them who are **mature** to **think in this way** also.

He also reminds them to **hold true** to what all who trust in Jesus have **attained**.

7. Thinking it through:

Get the students into groups to discuss the following:

- Paul told the Philippians that he knew he wasn't perfect yet. He also knew it was something that could not be achieved during this earthly lifetime. And yet, forgetting his past achievements, he strained forward towards that goal of becoming like Jesus. He looked upwards and heavenward even as he sought to live a godly life on earth. What was most

reassuring was the truth that he knew he would achieve this goal, not because he tried hard enough or that he was good enough, but because “Christ Jesus had taken hold of him” – which means that he belonged to Jesus, and Christ would hold on fast to him till the very end. Paul also encouraged the Philippians to think in this way.

- What about us? Most of us get so preoccupied with what we think are “long-term goals” that only revolve around earthly things which will only last for this lifetime and then are no more. Our goal should be the same as Paul’s, an eternal goal. Pray that God will give us the maturity to think in this way.

8. Responding to God’s Word:

Group prayer time.

You may like to pray along some of these points:

- a) Thank God that he has saved us and made us his own through Christ Jesus.*
- b) Pray that God will help us to have the goal of becoming just like Jesus as the ultimate goal in life.*
- c) Pray that God will help us to persevere in straining towards this eternal goal until the day we see Jesus face to face.*

9. Digging deeper:

Get your students to read and think through 2 Timothy 4:6-8. Towards the end of his life, as Paul wrote his letter to Timothy, he says with full confidence that he had fought the good fight of faith, he had finished the race and kept trusting in Jesus. He now looked forward to a crown of righteousness that God had kept in store for him. And guess what? This crown wasn’t just for Paul, but it’s for all of us who trust in Jesus as well! What a wonderful thing to look forward to from eternity’s perspective.

10. Closing Prayer

Lesson 11: Citizens of Heaven (Philippians 3:17-21)

1. Opening prayer

2. Game: Countries Trivia

Materials needed:

- A list of true or false statements with regards to laws/cultural practices of various countries.
- You can come up with these statements from the internet (e.g. <https://www.rd.com/funny-stuff/13-funny-international-laws-you-d-never-know-were-real/>).

Instructions:

- Divide the students into groups.
- Read out one statement you have regarding a country's law/cultural practices etc.
- Each group must decide whether the statement is true or false.
- Points are awarded to the group(s) which makes the correct guess.
- Go through the list of true or false statements with the students.

Objective of the game:

Just as the students are asked to think about different laws and practices in various countries, today's lesson will help us think about what it means to be citizens of heaven.

3. Just for starters question

Ask your students to think about which country they would want to be a citizen of if they could choose and why.

4. Recap on Philippians 3:12-16

Get the students to remember the truths they have learnt in the previous lesson.

5. Reading through the passage: Philippians 3:17-21

Get the students to read Philippians 3:17-21 together.

6. Looking into the passage:

Paul wrote to the Philippians about pressing forward towards the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Phil 3:14).

Q1. What are Paul's instructions to the Philippians in v17?

He instructs them to **imitate** him and **to keep their eyes** on those who **walk** according to the **example** they have seen in Paul and his ministry companions.

Q2. Why did Paul instruct the Philippians in this manner? Who did he warn them against? (v18)

There were many around who walked as **enemies of the cross of Christ**. These people opposed **Jesus** and rejected the true teaching of the **Gospel**.

Q3. According to Paul, how do the "enemies of the cross" live? (v19)

Their **end** is **destruction**: They would face God's **judgment**.

Their **god** is their **belly**: They lived to **satisfy** their own **sinful desires**.

They **glory** in their **shame**: They are proud of their **sinful behaviour**.

Their **minds** are set on **earthly things**.

Q4. How does Paul distinguish those who are godly from those who are enemies of Christ? (v20)

He reminds them that their citizenship (and the citizenship of all who trust in Jesus) is in **heaven**.

They look forward to the **return** of their saviour **Jesus Christ** and the **transformation** of their **lowly bodies** to be like Jesus' **glorious body** at his return.

7. Thinking it through:

Ask your students to think through the questions in this section.

- Paul reminds the Philippians that they are to look forward to Jesus' return. Even as they did so, they were to imitate his example and the example of those who were godly.
- Paul warned them against those who were "enemies of the cross of Christ" – these could have been false teachers who were going around teaching a false gospel, or society in general, who lived to satisfy their own sinful desires and were destined for judgment.
- They were to be vigilant in imitating those who were co-citizens of heaven. Paul urges the Philippians to live differently and distinctly, since their true home is a heavenly one, and their Saviour is none other than the glorious resurrected Jesus.

8. Responding to God's Word:

Group prayer time.

You may like to pray along some of these points:

- a. Thank God that he has made us citizens of heaven through faith in Christ Jesus.*
- b. Pray that God will help us to be vigilant in living lives which please him while we are here on earth.*
- c. Pray that God will help us to keep looking forward to the day Jesus will return to rule as king.*

9. Digging deeper:

Get your students to read and think through Revelation 21:1-4

- When John sees a vision of how things will be like when Jesus returns to rule as king, he sees a majestic and beautiful picture. All of creation is made new, with the old passing away. The sea, which symbolizes chaos and destruction is no more. He hears a voice saying that God's dwelling is with His people. God himself will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death, mourning, crying, pain or suffering.
- This is simply mind-blowing. Imagine looking forward to an eternal future just like that, where we can be with God and enjoy him forever! Let us remember then, that our citizenship is in heaven, and this is what we are looking forward to for all eternity.

10. Closing prayer

Lesson 12: Rejoicing in the Lord (Philippians 4:1-7)

1. Opening prayer

2. Game: Who Laughed First?

Instructions:

- Ask the students to get into pairs, with their backs facing one another.
- At the count of three, get them to turn around and face each other.
- Each pair must keep eye contact with one another, and are not allowed to speak.
- The first person in the pair who laughs is eliminated from the game, whilst the one who doesn't laugh goes on to find a new person to play another round.
- The final round may see 2 persons competing with one another to see who can hold his/her laughter the best.

Objective of the game:

Laughter is often linked to happiness and joy. This game creates the mood/atmosphere for students to begin thinking about what it truly means to rejoice in the Lord from today's lesson.

3. Just for starters question

Ask your students to think of an item, person or hobby (or anything else for that matter) which they think makes them most happy. If possible, get them to explain why this thing brings them such happiness.

4. Recap on Philippians 3:17-21

What were the instructions given by Paul to the Philippians? Who did he warn them against? What was the reminder to them regarding their identity and focus in life?

5. Reading through the passage: Philippians 4:1-7

Get the students to read Philippians 4:1-7 together.

6. Looking into the passage:

At the end of Philippians 3, Paul reminded the Philippians that their citizenship was a heavenly one, and that they were to live their lives looking forward to the return of their Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Q1. What does Paul remind the Philippians to do? (v1)

He reminds them to **stand firm** in the **Lord**.

Q2. Two women in the Philippian church, Euodia and Syntyche appeared to be having a disagreement with one another. Who are they in relation to Paul? (v3)

They are women who have **laboured** side by side with Paul, his ministry companions in the **gospel** and are fellow believers.

Q3. What is Paul's plea to these two women and to the rest of the Philippian church? (vv2-3a)

He entreats them to agree in the Lord.

He also urges the rest of the Philippian church to **help** both women to be reconciled.

Q4. According to Paul, who were the Philippians to rejoice in? (v4)

They were to rejoice in the **Lord, always**.

Q5. Paul tells the Philippians that "the Lord is at hand". How are they to live in the light of this truth? (vv5-7)

They are to let their **reasonableness** be known to everyone.

They are not to be **anxious**, but to bring **everything** to God in **prayer** with **thanksgiving**.

Q6. What is the promise that comes with prayer Paul writes to the Philippians about? (v7)

The promise that comes with prayer is that the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

7. Thinking it through:

Ask your students to think through the questions in this section.

- Are Christians meant to be happy, clappy people all the time? That's not what Paul is saying when he writes to the Philippians reminding them to rejoice in the Lord always. This joy which Paul talks about is not happiness which is dictated by circumstances, but rather it is a deep contentment which is based on trust in Jesus – knowing who he is and what he has done for us, and therefore, knowing our identity as people who belong to him. This sense of joy or contentment is not dependent upon circumstances, and can anchor a Christian even in the hardest of times.
- The evidence of this joy is also to be seen in the way the Philippians lived – they were to seek to be living in love with one another. They were also to be looking forward and always aware that the Lord is at hand- Jesus would return soon.
- In the light of that, they were to let their reasonableness be evident to all – they were to be considerate of the needs of others and not overbearing. They were not to be anxious about the things of this world. Instead, they should realize that they could bring everything in prayer to God, who hears them.

8. Responding to God's Word:

Group prayer time.

You may like to pray along some of these points:

- a) Pray that God will help us to rejoice in him always.*
- b) Pray that God will help us to remember that Jesus is at hand and will return*
- c) Pray that God will enable us to live in love with one another*

9. Digging deeper:

Get your students to read and reflect on Philippians 4:6-7 again.

- Prayer is simply the privilege we have as Christians to talk to God! And in these two precious verses, we are told the wonderful truth that we can talk to God about everything – there's nothing too small or too big that we cannot bring to God in prayer. We have the confidence that he will hear us because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross.
- As we come before God, we are to have an attitude of thanksgiving, remembering how good, gracious and loving he has been towards us. And while God doesn't promise to give us everything we ask for, we have the promise that as we speak to him in prayer, he will guard our hearts and minds in Jesus- that is, he will keep us trusting in Jesus, holding fast to him and rejoicing in him, always.

10. Closing prayer

Lesson 13: Having the Mind of Christ (Philippians 4:8-9)

1. Opening prayer

2. Game: Mind games

Instructions:

- At the start of the game, ask several students to come to the front. They will be the “mind-masters” of the game. They do not belong to any group.
- The rest of the students can get into groups.
- For each round, one of the “mind-masters” will be asked to step up to the front.
- He/she will be given a category and asked to choose 1 answer from the options given to him/her. The mind-master must not reveal what he/she has chosen first. (E.g. Pick 1 number between 1-5, think of 1 alphabet, think of 1 of the colours of the rainbow).
- Each group can proceed to guess what this mind master has in mind.
- After each group has made a guess, the mind master can proceed to reveal the correct answer he/she has chosen.
- The group with the correct guess wins that round.
- The game can be repeated until all the “mind masters” have had their turn.

Objective of the game:

“Mind games” is a fun game which helps students get thinking about the importance of their mindset according to the Scripture in today’s lesson.

3. Just for starters question

Ask your students whether they agree or disagree with the statement “I think therefore I am” and why.

4. Recap on Philippians 4:1-7

What was the reminder Paul gave to the Philippians?

What does it mean for a Christian to "rejoice in the Lord always" and how would this look like in his/her life?

5. Reading through the passage: Philippians 4:8-9

Get the students to read Philippians 4:8-9 together.

6. Looking into the passage:

Q1. Can you list down the characteristics of the things Paul exhorts the Philippians to think about? (v8)

He exhorts them to think about whatever is:

True

Honourable

Just

Pure

Lovely

Commendable

Excellent

Worthy of Praise

Q2. Can you recall some of the things Paul had written to the Philippians regarding the things they could think about which have the 8 characteristics mentioned above?

- i. They are to have the mindset of Jesus, who humbled himself and became a human, being obedient to death on a cross, rising to life and is now seated at God's righthand. (Philippians 2:1-11)
- ii. They are to seek to know Jesus, that righteousness comes only through faith in him, and not any earthly achievements or works (Philippians 3:1-11).

- iii. They are to have their minds set on the **prize** of the **upward call** of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:12-16).
- iv. As citizens of **heaven**, they are to look forward to Jesus' **return** (Philippians 3:17-21).

Q3. What is Paul's reminder to all of them, once again? What is the reassurance they have as they do so? (v9)

The Philippians are to put to **practice** all they have **learned** and **received** and **heard** and **seen** in Paul and the **God of peace** will be with them.

7. Thinking it through:

Ask your students to think through the questions in this section.

- We've spent today's lesson recalling the precious truths we've learnt from Philippians so far. How can we be seeking to cultivate a Christ-centred mindset? Having this mindset is much more than just thinking happy thoughts or inculcating positive thinking. It's having a mindset that is just like Jesus' that knows and desires to please him and to do his will.
- We can't change who we are just by changing our way of thinking. We need the Holy Spirit's help to do so. As we read God's Word more and more, His Spirit works in us to change the way we think, and he helps us put what we have learnt to practice. We can also be proactively seeking to encourage one another to grow in our knowledge of Christ and to live in a godly manner.
- We can also pray for one another, not just for our needs, but for our spiritual growth in all aspects, more and more into the likeness of Jesus.

8. Responding to God's Word:

Group prayer time.

You may like to pray along some of these points:

- a) Thank God for the precious reminders from his word in today's lesson.*
- b) Pray that God will help us to cultivate a Christ-centred mindset.*
- c) Pray that God will help us to put what we have learnt from Scripture to practice.*

9. Digging deeper:

Get your students to read and reflect on Philippians 4:8 again.

- The 8 characteristics which are mentioned in verse 8 can be found when we fix our minds on Jesus. For example, remembering that Jesus is worthy of praise helps us to direct the focus of attention away from ourselves, towards Christ who died and rose again to rescue us.
- When we consider what is commendable, let us remember our brothers and sisters in Christ who give of their time and energy in commendable service to Christ and his people. The list can go on forever.
- Let us pray for God to give us a Christ-centred mindset and the strength to be able to put what we have learnt to practice.

10. Closing prayer

Lesson 14: True Contentment (Philippians 4:10-13)

1. Opening prayer

2. Activity: The “satisfaction” survey

Materials needed:

- A list of statements to conduct the survey.
 - E.g. I would be satisfied if I had one million dollars.
 - I would be content if I scored straight As for my exams.
 - I would feel complete in life if I met the guy/girl of my dreams.

Instructions:

- Read out the list of statements from the satisfaction survey one at a time.
- Ask the students to raise their right hand if they agree with the statement. If they disagree with it, to raise their left hand and if they are undecided or somewhere in between to raise both hands.

Objective of the game:

This survey gives insight into what your students think they need to find contentment. This can then be compared to what true contentment is all about according to God’s Word.

3. Just for starters question

Ask your students in groups, to complete the following sentence: “I would be satisfied if...” and share their answers with the group.

4. Recap on Philippians 4:8-9

Can you remember the 8 characteristics which Paul exhorted the Philippians to think about? What kind of mindset should the Philippians seek to cultivate?

Ask your students to remember and reflect on what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

5. Reading through the passage: Philippians 4:10-13

Get the students to read Philippians 4:10-13 together.

6. Looking into the passage:

Q1. Paul writes to the Philippians of his awareness of their love for him. How was this expressed? (v10)

They were **concerned** for Paul, but had no **opportunity** to help him before this.

Q2. Although Paul is appreciative of their concern and help, what does he tell them? (v11)

He writes to them that he has learnt in **every** situation to be **content**.

Q3. What kinds of situations has Paul experienced so far as a servant of the Gospel? (v12)

He has been brought **low**, been in **need**, suffered **hunger**.

He has also known what is like to **abound** and have **plenty**.

Q4. What is Paul's secret of contentment, both in times of suffering and ease? (v13)

He knows that he can do **all things** through **Christ** who **strengthens** him.

7. Thinking it through:

Ask your students to think through the questions in this section.

- In a world where everyone is striving to attain and achieve and have more and more, be they earthly possessions, worldly achievements and successes, it is often hard to find

contentment anywhere. Sometimes we are tempted to think that the more we have, the more satisfied we will be. Very often, it is exactly the opposite. Paul tells the Philippians that he has learnt to be content, both in times of plenty and in times of suffering and great need.

- His secret of contentment is simple: knowing that he can endure and face both hard times and good times through Jesus who gives him strength. We often misquote this verse to mean that with Jesus we can achieve everything and anything we set our hearts to. But that's obviously NOT what Paul is saying. He is saying that he can find his ultimate satisfaction in Jesus, who strengthens him to face both suffering and ease.
- What about us? Is our ultimate contentment found in Jesus? Or are we seeking satisfaction through worldly things that won't last forever? Let us pray that God will enable us to find true contentment through the one who gives us strength.

8. Responding to God's Word:

Group prayer time.

You may like to pray along some of these points:

- a) Thank God for every spiritual blessing he has given to us in Christ Jesus.*
- b) Thank God that we can face both the hard and good times through Jesus who strengthens us.*
- c) Pray that God will enable us to find true contentment in Jesus.*

9. Digging deeper:

Get your students to read Philippians 3:7-11 once again and to reflect on these verses.

- Paul's previous achievements, his status, his religious standing – everything he once held dear he now counted as loss for the sake of knowing Jesus. It was only through faith in Jesus that

he could be saved. What about us? What do we take pride in or seek after? What are these “earthly gains” that we should count as loss and lay at the foot of the cross? It could be our good works, academic achievements or our abilities. At the end of the day, these things do not make us right with God. It’s only in knowing Jesus that we can be known as children of God.

10. Closing prayer

Lesson 15: Godly Giving (Philippians 4:14-23)

1. Opening prayer

2. Activity: Origami pocket

Materials needed:

- Coloured A4 paper

Instructions:

- Demonstrate to the students step by step how to make a simple origami pocket.
- You can check out the steps from origami websites such as: <http://origami.lovetoknow.com/about-origami/how-make-paper-pocket>

Objective of the activity:

An origami pocket which can be used to store items and money brings across the concept of giving which is the subject of today's lesson.

3. Just for starters question

Ask your students to recall a time when they received help or rendered help to someone in need. Encourage them to share their experience with their group members.

4. Recap on Philippians 4:10-13

Ask your students to remember and reflect on what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

5. Reading through the passage: Philippians 4:14-23

Get the students to read Philippians 4:14-23 together.

6. Looking into the passage:

In the previous verses, Paul writes of his awareness of the Philippians' concern for him in his need. (vv10-13)

Q1. How was the Gospel partnership between Paul and the Philippians expressed? (vv14-16)

They were the only church that entered into **partnership** with Paul in **giving and receiving** at the beginning of his ministry.

They sent him **help** for his needs as Paul served in ministry.

Q2. How have the Philippians helped Paul at the time he wrote the letter? (v18)

Paul who was in prison at the time of writing this letter is well **supplied** by the **gifts** they had sent through Epaphroditus.

Q3. How does Paul view the Philippians' giving? (vv17-18)

Paul sees their act of giving as **fruit** that increases to their **credit**. This is because their godliness in giving is **pleasing** to God.

The gifts they have sent to Paul as a minister of the Gospel for God's service, a **fragrant offering, a sacrifice** acceptable and pleasing to **God**.

Q4. What is Paul confident about, even as the Philippians continue their generous service in giving? (v19)

He is confident that God will **supply** all their **needs** according to his riches in glory.

Q5. How does Paul end his letter to the Philippians? (vv20-23)

He ends by giving **glory** to God and **greeting** every saint in Christ Jesus at Philippi.

7. Thinking it through:

Ask your students to ponder over these questions and what they have learnt.

- Paul was thankful for the help rendered by the Philippians as they gave towards him in times of need. The Philippians practised godliness in giving as partners in the Gospel with Paul. Paul tells them that in their giving, they are the ones who are blessed! That is because God is pleased with their gift for the sake of the Gospel.
- In giving, there is a confidence that God will supply all their needs according to his riches in glory. Now, note that Paul doesn't say God will make them extremely rich or supply all their wants! In fact, Paul himself has experienced times when he was hungry and in need! But God would be gracious in looking after his people.
- Paul rounds off his letter by giving all glory to God and sending greeting to his fellow saints in Christ, those who have been saved by Christ and set apart to live for his praise and glory.
- How about us? Are there ways that we can be giving towards those who are in need, especially those who are seeking to serve Christ and His Gospel? We might feel that what we can give isn't significant, but to God, every gift is a fragrant offering, acceptable and pleasing in his sight. And we can also give in terms of time and assistance. There are endless ways to be giving towards God's kingdom!
- Remember also that as servants of God's kingdom, we are saints of Christ Jesus, set apart for his service and purposes. Let us strive to do all things for his glory.

8. Responding to God's Word:

Group prayer time

You may like to pray along some of these points:

- a) Thank God for the privilege we have in giving towards the work of the Gospel.*
- b) Pray that God will help us to be godly and generous in giving towards those in need who are serving Him.*
- c) Pray that God will give us opportunities to help others and give of ourselves for the extension of his kingdom.*

9. Digging deeper:

Spend some time reflecting on the truths you and your students have learnt throughout the entire book of Philippians.

Take time to pray and give thanks to God. Ask for God's help to put all that has been learnt to practice.

10. Closing prayer