



Clothing Christ-Style

(based on Colossians 3:12-17)

A long time ago, there was a place where the followers of Jesus met together as part of the church. This was in the city of Colossae (ko-LAH-see).

When the church met, there was a lot of singing and praying and talking. The people loved Jesus very much. They wanted to learn how to live like Jesus and show God's love the way Jesus did.

One day, a letter arrived from their friend Paul. The church loved getting letters from Paul. He had taught them so much about following in Jesus' way of love.

"I wonder what Paul has to say this time?" the people said to each other.

They all gathered around to hear what Paul had to say. It was a long letter and this is part of it.

Dear Friends,

God has chosen each one of you to live a life of love. This means that every day you must put on God's clothes of kindness, caring, and gentleness. Be patient with each other. If someone does something wrong, then forgive them. God has forgiven you, so you should forgive others.

The most important thing to wear each day is love. If you have love, you won't go wrong.

Live in peace and remember to give thanks for all of God's blessings. Read the Scriptures and sing to God often. Do everything in the name of Jesus.

From your friend,

Paul

The people listened to Paul's words. They tried very hard to follow his advice. They kept Paul's letter very safe and passed it on to their children and their children's children. Eventually, Paul's letter was written into our Bible, so that followers of Jesus everywhere would remember to put on love every day.



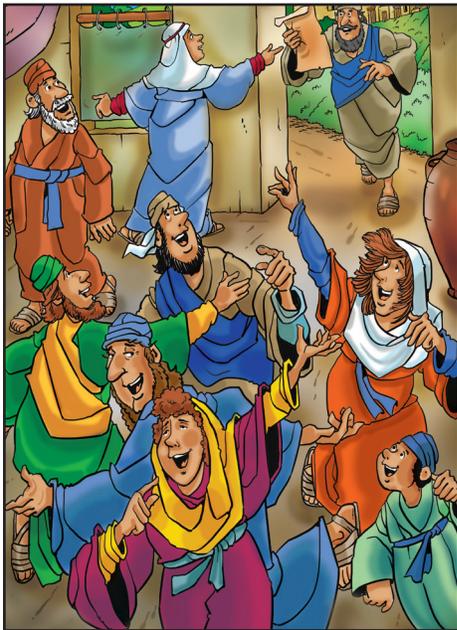
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Ask your children to draw a picture of their experiences of love in their lives.
- Talk with your family about times you have forgiven one another. How did you feel having forgiven someone, and how did it feel to be forgiven?



Responding to God's Grace

- Do an internet search for a paper doll template. Print and cut out the dolls and clothes. Write words from Paul's letter to the Colossians on the doll clothes. Some suggestions are kindness, caring, peace, and thanks. What words can you find in the story? As your children play with the dolls, talk about what it's like to "put on God's clothes."
- Send your love to someone faraway. Write or draw a letter on paper that you can mail with an envelope, street address, and stamp.
- Send an e-mail letter to someone, sharing Paul's instructions to the Colossians. Which is easier, e-mail or sending a letter? Which would you rather receive?

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Draw around your children with sidewalk chalk, and then let them draw clothes on their outlines. Label each item of clothing with a word from Paul.
- Make gingerbread cookies and let your children use icing to draw or paint clothes on them.
- Pray:

God, help us to live in peace. We thank you for your many blessings. In Jesus' name. Amen.