

SECTION
2.6
The Epistles

Introduction Activity (5 Minutes)
Option 1: A Special Letter

What You'll Need: Stationery or paper, envelope

PREP: Before class, write a letter to your T&T group. (Optional: Ask a church leader to write a short letter to your club.)

STEP 1: Explain to the kids that your T&T club received a letter. Read the letter aloud, and then pass the letter around for the kids to read.

STEP 2: While the kids are reading the letter, ask if anyone wants to share a time when they received a special card or letter.

STEP 3: Ask the following questions:

- How do you feel when you get a letter or a card in the mail?
- Why might people send a letter or a card?
- What other ways do people communicate with one another?

STEP 4: Share these key concepts:

- People in New Testament times who lived far apart could only communicate by visiting or sending a letter.
- It would take a long time to receive a letter, so it meant a lot for someone to send a letter.
- The Holy Spirit inspired men who were traveling to share the good news to write letters to different people or churches they had visited. These letters are a part of the New Testament and are called the Epistles.

STEP 5: Transition into the main lesson by opening in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help you and your kids understand the importance of studying and obeying the Epistles.

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Introduction Activity (5 Minutes)

Option 2: A Card for Every Occasion

What You'll Need: Random assortment of greeting cards (they can be written on or blank)

STEP 1: Show the kids the greeting cards you brought, noticing with them the different occasions why people send greeting cards, like birthdays and special days.

STEP 2: Ask the kids:

- How do you feel when you get a letter or a card in the mail?
- Why might people send a letter or a card?
- What other ways do people communicate with one another?

STEP 3: Share these key concepts:

- People in New Testament times who lived far apart could only communicate by visiting or sending a letter.
- It would take a long time to receive a letter, so it meant a lot for someone to send a letter.
- The Holy Spirit inspired men who were traveling to share the good news to write letters to different people or churches they had visited. These letters are a part of the New Testament and are called the Epistles.

STEP 4: Transition into the main lesson by explaining that today's lesson is about the Epistles, which are letters written to and from early Christians. Open in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help you and your kids understand the importance of studying and obeying the Epistles.

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Main Lesson Activity (10 Minutes)

Option 1: Important Reminders

What You'll Need: Bibles, paper, six chairs, balloons, permanent marker, Important Reminders Handout, scissors, tape

PREP: Write each verse reference on a balloon with a permanent marker, and print out the Important Reminders Handout, cutting it along the lines. Tape each portion to a different chair, and line the chairs up along one side of the space where you meet.

STEP 1: Have kids work in pairs or groups, and give each pair or group one of the balloons with a verse reference written on it.

Philippians 4:8 (Think about good things.)

Ephesians 2:10 (God created us to do the work He has prepared for us.)

Ephesians 4:32 (We need to be kind to each other.)

Colossians 1:13-14 (God has delivered us from darkness to light.)

1 Peter 2:11 (We should not give in to sinful desires.)

1 John 1:9 (God will forgive us if we confess our sins.)

STEP 2: Encourage kids to read their passages and find out the lesson that believers can learn from that Epistle verse.

STEP 3: Once they have an idea about what their verse might mean, have them line up on one side of the space, with their balloon.

STEP 4: Explain that they will now have to get their balloon to the right summary of what the verse is about, by blowing it there (no touching it with anything). Then have the game begin by saying, "Go!"

STEP 5: Check the kids' answers, and congratulate

them. Then share the following concepts.

- The people in the early church told everyone about the good news of Jesus, and the church grew (Acts 2:41-45). They even sent out missionaries to share Christ with others who lived far away (Acts 8:26-40). As those people came to know Christ, they started churches in their towns and villages. Soon there were many churches all over.
- These brand new churches needed help. The Holy Spirit inspired men to write letters to believers and churches to help them know how to get along with other believers and how to live like Christ (2 Peter 1:21).
- When a church would receive a letter, they would read it aloud as a group. Each of the letters were a little different. Some of the letters taught the believers truths about God and salvation (Romans). Others taught them how to function as a church (1 and 2 Corinthians). Some letters pointed out that believers were sinning and needed to get things right (Philippians 4:2).
- Each Epistle is valuable for believers today. As we study the Epistles, we will learn exactly how God wants us to treat one another and serve Him.

STEP 6: Follow up with the Lesson Application questions and Sum It Up statements from the Large Group Guide.



Important Reminders Handout

***We should think about
good things.***

***God created us
to do work He has
prepared for us.***

***We need to be kind
to each other.***

***God has delivered us
from darkness to light.***

***We should not give in
to sinful desires.***

***God will forgive us
if we confess our sins.***

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Main Lesson Activity (10 Minutes)

Option 2: Early Church News

What You'll Need: Bible, computer and printer, Early Church News Handout

PREP: Before class, print out copies of the Early Church News Handout. Cut apart the sections.

STEP 1: Divide kids into three groups and tell the groups to imagine they are one of the first New Testament churches.

STEP 2: Give the groups their corresponding section of the handout and have a spokesperson from each group read aloud their information to the group, and fill in one of the sections with what the verse says. After one minute, have the spokesperson from each group pass the letter to another group and then choose a new spokesperson from that group to read that letter. Continue the activity until each group has read all three letters.

STEP 3: Share these key concepts:

- The people in the early church told everyone about the good news of Jesus, and the church grew (Acts 2:41-45). They even sent out missionaries to share Christ with others who lived far away. As those people came to know Christ, they started churches in their towns and villages. Soon, there were many churches all over.
- These brand new churches needed help. The Holy Spirit inspired men to write letters to believers and churches to help them know how to get along with other believers and how to live like Christ (2 Peter 1:21). Often while these men were traveling to churches, they would remember something that they wanted to share with one of the churches. They would then write a letter to that church and send that letter with someone.
- When a church would receive a letter, they would read it aloud as a group. Each of the letters were a little different. Some of the letters taught the believers truths about

God and salvation (Romans). Others taught them how to function as a church (1 and 2 Corinthians). Some letters pointed out that believers were sinning and needed to get things right (Philippians 4:2).

- These letters would then be passed around to the other churches. All of the churches benefited from the Epistles (Colossians 4:16).
- We, too, benefit from the Epistles. When we read, study, and apply the truths of these books to our lives, we will grow to become more and more like Christ. We will know how to get along with other believers, and we will have the wisdom and strength to tell others about Christ.

STEP 4: Follow up with the Lesson Application questions and Sum It Up statements from the Large Group Guide.

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Early Church News

ROMANS: Greater understanding of our salvation and growing in the righteousness of God!

Dear Roman Believers,

It has come to our understanding that a letter you received from Paul is listed in the Bible as Romans and is open for all believers to read and study. In order to help believers study your letter from Paul, we have listed the following summaries for the book.

The book of Romans was written by Paul to the believers in Rome. This book offers a greater understanding of our salvation, and encourages us to grow in the righteousness of God.

We appreciate your willingness to share this great letter with other believers

Sincerely,

Fellow Believers in Christ

Romans 6:23

Romans 12:1-2

Romans 10:9-10

Early Church News

EPHESIANS: Who we are because of our salvation, and how to get along with others!

Dear Ephesian Believers,

It has come to our understanding that a letter you received from Paul is listed in the Bible as Ephesians and is open for all believers to read and study. In order to help believers study your letter from Paul, we have listed the following summaries for the book.

The book of Ephesians was written by Paul to the believers in Ephesus. The first few chapters of the book focus on who we are because of our salvation in Christ. The rest of the book deals with how we are to get along with other believers, members of our family, and employers and employees. The book ends with instruction on the armor of God.

We appreciate your willingness to share this great letter with other believers

Sincerely,

Fellow Believers in Christ

Ephesians 2:8-9

Ephesians 4:32

Ephesians 6:1-2

Early Church News

PHILIPPIANS: Keep growing in the faith, and get along with each other!

Dear Philippian Believers,

It has come to our understanding that a letter you received from Paul is listed in the Bible as Philippians and is open for all believers to read and study. In order to help believers study your letter from Paul, we have listed the following summaries for the book.

The book of Philippians was written by Paul (who was in prison for preaching the gospel) to the believers in Philippi. Paul wrote to the believers to encourage them to keep growing in their faith. Two believers were struggling with one another, and Paul urged them to get along with one another.

We appreciate your willingness to share this great letter with other believers

Sincerely,

Fellow Believers in Christ

Philippians 1:6

Philippians 4:8-9

Philippians 4:19