

August 1, 1999  
Early Childhood  
Paul Wrote a Letter to Philemon.

Philemon  
1PHM01EC

**Materials I Need:**

**Memory Verse:**

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other. Ephesians 4:32

**Attributes of God emphasized in the book of Philemon: God is kind and forgiving.**

**Aim Questions for 2's & 3's:**

1. **Did Paul write a letter while he was in jail?** *(Yes. Paul was in jail, but he talked to people about Jesus and wrote letters to his friends.)*
2. **Did Onesimus run away from home to Rome?** *(Yes, but when Onesimus believed in Jesus, he knew that he had to go back home to Philemon.)*
3. **Did Paul write a letter asking Philemon to forgive Onesimus?** *(Yes. God forgives us and we must forgive other people.)*
4. **Did Paul know that Philemon would be kind to Onesimus?** *(Yes. Say the memory verse.)*
5. **Does God want us to be kind and forgiving to our brothers, sisters, and friends?** *(Yes. Jesus is kind and forgiving to us and will help us be kind and forgiving, too.)*

**Aim Questions for 4's, 5's & K:**

1. **Why was Paul in jail in Rome?** *(Paul was in jail for preaching about Jesus.)*
2. **What was the name of the runaway slave who believed in Jesus after hearing Paul preach the gospel from jail in Rome?** *(Onesimus was Philemon's slave who had run away from Colossae to Rome.)*
3. **Why did Paul write a letter to Philemon?** *(Paul wrote a letter asking Philemon to forgive Onesimus and free him from slavery.)*
4. **Why does God ask His children to forgive the people who hurt them?** *(We forgive others because God has forgiven us. God gives us kind, tender-hearted, forgiving attitudes toward people.)*
5. **Let's all say the memory verse together.**
6. **Is there anyone in your family or neighborhood who needs your kindness and forgiveness?**

**Key for symbols:**

- This box symbol represents ideas that can be used for two-year-olds through kindergarten. Please remember to slow down the pace for two-year-olds and keep the pace moving for five-year-olds.
- ② This symbol represents ideas that are best used for two- and three-year-olds.
- ④ This symbol represents ideas that are best used for four-year-olds through kindergarten.



**Hook:**

- Letter Writing Center:** Materials needed: writing paper, envelopes, pencils, crayons, colorful stamps, envelope seals. Encourage the children to write on the paper, address the envelopes, add the "postage" and seal it to give to someone. In today's Bible Adventure, Paul will write a letter to a man named Philemon asking him to forgive his slave, Onesimus.

- "Kindness" Awards: (1PHM01ECGF11)** Throughout the morning, award an "I was kind today!" badge to each child as he does thoughtful things for others in the class. By the end of the morning, everyone should have a badge to wear home.
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- Be Kind to One Another Center:** Set up a home center to include a kitchen area, dress-up clothes, and toy center. Encourage the children to be kind to one another as they serve meals, help dress each other, or share their toys. As a group, everyone could work together to help pack for a trip, get ready for church, or go somewhere at the children's suggestions. In today's Bible Adventure, Paul asks Philemon to be kind to his runaway slave.
- "I Love Jesus" Game:** Define the boundaries of an open space for the game. Blindfold a leader and have him stand in the open space. The children will say, "I love Jesus," and the leader will listen to the voices and try to catch a "Paul" for talking about Jesus. Suggest the children move quietly throughout the area and only say, "I love Jesus," when they are away from the leader. The "Pauls" who are tagged could go stand with another leader (jail) until another round is played. Today's Bible Adventure tells that Paul was put in jail for telling other people about Jesus.
- Paul Under Guard Coloring Center: (1PHM01ECGF1)** Color Paul talking to the guard about Jesus. As the children color, talk about Paul not being able to leave the house where he stayed. Paul was arrested and put under guard for talking about Jesus.
- Play Money: (1PHM01ECGF10)** Provide paper money sheets to be colored and cut out. Ask older children to count out different amounts of pennies and separate them into piles. "In the Bible Adventure today, we will hear that a man named Onesimus stole money from someone. We will find out what happened to Onesimus." Talk about taking money that isn't ours and how wrong that is. It requires us to go and say we are sorry and give it back.
- Coin Rubbing:** Give each child several coins of different denominations and a piece of typing paper. Place the coins under the paper and rub the side of a crayon that has the paper removed. Talk about taking money that isn't ours and how wrong that is.
- Can't Hide from God:** Run in place and when the whistle blows, pretend to pick up a bag and hide it under a table. Can God see the person under the table? Yes, He does. He sees us all the time. We can't hide from God! Repeat as long as children are interested.
- Play Dough:** Give each child a piece of play dough to smash and roll out to a thin sheet. With a finger or end of a pencil, write on the play dough as if writing a letter to a friend. Paul writes a letter in the Bible Adventure today. Listen and find out who is going to receive this letter and what it says.
- Paul in House Arrest:** In the Bible Adventure, Paul is in house arrest. What does that mean? Why was he under arrest? It was like being in prison because he couldn't leave but he was in a house and could have visitors. Let children take turns sitting in Paul's chair pretending to write a letter or talk to someone about Jesus. Place a barricade of chairs around Paul and station a guard near him. If an appliance box is available, use this for Paul's prison house.
- Map Play: (1PHM01ECGF6)** Let the children "walk" their fingers from Rome to Colossae and back. Tell them that a slave in the Bible Adventure will walk the long distance between the two cities. Talk about taking long trips by foot. Repeat the names "Colossae" and "Rome" often so that the children will become familiar with the names of the cities.
- ④ **Slave Aprons:** Let the children try on aprons and talk about what it was like to be a slave in Bible times. A slave was owned by a person called his master. About one third of the people were slaves. They did all kinds of jobs. The children will hear about a real slave in the Bible Adventure today.



## Book:

### Presentation Ideas -

- Color and mount the **1PHM01ECGF1**, **1PHM01ECGF2**, **1PHM01ECGF3**, and **1PHM01ECGF4** pictures on construction paper. Show them as you tell the Bible Adventure.
- Show the book of Philemon to the class and explain that it was a letter from Paul to another Christian named Philemon.

### **Bible Adventure for 2's & 3's-**

*(Show the GF1 picture.)* Paul was an apostle who loved Jesus. *Have the children clap their hands once as they say the name, "Paul." Repeat several times.* Paul talked about Jesus wherever he went. Paul said, "Jesus is alive! I love Jesus!"

Some people at Jerusalem didn't want to hear about Jesus. The leaders at Jerusalem sent Paul to jail in Rome so he would stop talking about Jesus.

Paul didn't stop talking about Jesus just because he was in jail. Paul talked to the guards who kept watch over him. Paul said, "Jesus is alive! I love Jesus!"

*(Show the GF2 picture.)* Paul talked to a man named Onesimus. Onesimus is a big name. Say, "Onesimus," as we clap our hands. *(Clap one, two, three, four times as you say, "O-ne-si-mus.")*

Onesimus had done some wrong things. Onesimus had run away from home and was hiding in the big city of Rome. Onesimus knew that he needed to stop disobeying and starting doing the right things.

Paul told Onesimus that Jesus would help him obey God. Onesimus bowed his head and asked Jesus to help him obey and do what was right.

*(Show the GF3 picture.)* Paul wrote a letter to his friend, Philemon. *(Have the children clap three times as they say, "Phi-le-mon.")* Philemon lived in a town far away from where Paul was living in Rome.

Paul wrote in his letter, "Dear Philemon, Onesimus loves Jesus and wants to obey. He must come back home to you and do what is right. Please be kind and tender-hearted to him. Forgive Onesimus just like God has forgiven you."

*(Show the GF4 picture.)* Paul signed his name, sealed the letter, and sent the letter with Onesimus and a friend on the long journey to Philemon's home.

*(Wave your hand.)* Paul said, "Good-bye, Onesimus. Say, 'Hi,' to Philemon." Onesimus said, "Good-bye, Paul. Pray for us."

It would be a long walk for Onesimus to go home to Philemon. Paul would miss his friend, Onesimus, very much. Paul bowed his head and said, "Dear God, please take care of Onesimus on his long journey. Please bring him safely back to me. In Jesus' name I pray, amen."

**Prayer:** Dear God, I want to obey and do the right thing, like Onesimus. I want to be kind and forgiving like Philemon. In Jesus' name, amen.

### **Bible Adventure for 4's, 5's & K-**

*(Show the GF1 picture.)* Paul was an apostle who loved Jesus. Paul talked about Jesus wherever he went. Some people at Jerusalem hated Jesus and hated anyone who talked about Jesus. The leaders at Jerusalem sent Paul to jail because he talked about Jesus.

Paul didn't stop talking about Jesus just because he was in jail in Rome. Paul talked to the guards who kept watch over him. Paul talked to anyone who wanted to hear about Jesus.

*(Show the GF2 picture.)* Paul talked to a man named Onesimus. Onesimus had done some wrong things and he knew that they were wrong. Onesimus was a slave who had stolen money from his master. Then Onesimus ran away from home and was hiding in the big city of Rome. Onesimus knew that he had disobeyed God and had disobeyed his master, Philemon. Onesimus knew that he needed God's forgiveness and a new heart to do the right things.

Paul told Onesimus that Jesus would forgive his sins and give him a clean, tender heart that would want to obey God. Onesimus bowed his head and asked Jesus to give him a clean heart that would want to obey.

Paul knew that it was not right for Onesimus to keep hiding in Rome. Onesimus needed to do the right thing and go back to his master, Philemon.

*(Show the GF3 picture.)* Paul wrote a letter to Philemon. Philemon lived in the city of Colossae and was part of the church there. Philemon had a large home and the Colossian church met in his home.

Paul knew that Philemon would forgive Onesimus for stealing money from him and for running away from home. How did Paul know that Philemon would forgive Onesimus and not hold a grudge against him? People who love Jesus have Jesus' kind, tender-hearted, forgiving attitude toward other people who hurt them. Philemon had Jesus' kind of forgiving heart.

Paul wrote in his letter, "Dear Philemon, Onesimus has become a whole-hearted follower of Jesus. But, we know that he must come back to you and do what is right. I am sure that you will be kind and tender-hearted to him. I know that you will forgive Onesimus just like God has forgiven you.

"If Onesimus owes you any money, I will help him pay you. We want to do the right thing. Onesimus has been very helpful to me while I have been in jail. I would love for him to come back to me if you will free him from being your slave. At least, treat him as well as you would treat me if I were to come to you."

(Show the GF4 picture.) Paul signed his name, sealed the letter, and sent the letter with Onesimus and a friend on the long journey to Colossae.

Paul said, "Good-bye, Onesimus. Say, 'Hi,' to my church friends in Colossae. Tell them we love them and are praying for them."

Paul was eager to hear what Philemon would say. It would be a long walk for Onesimus to go from Rome to the city of Colossae. It would be a long time before Paul would hear back from his friends. Paul would miss Onesimus very much. Onesimus had been like a loved son to him. But, Paul knew that Philemon would forgive Onesimus and send him back to him as soon as he could.

Paul bowed his head and said, "Dear God, please take care of Onesimus on his long journey. Please bring him safely back to me. In Jesus' name I pray, amen."

**Prayer:** Dear God, I want to obey and do the right thing, like Onesimus. I want to be kind and forgiving like Philemon. In Jesus' name, amen.



### Look:

**Memory Verse Echo:** Divide the class in half with each half being led by a teacher. Half the class says, "Be kind to one another." The other half repeats it. Repeat the procedure for the words, "tender-hearted," "forgiving each other," and "Ephesians 4:32." Repeat the verse again with the second group changing to the first part. The older children could include standing when their part is spoken.

**Snack:** Assign two children from each table to serve the others in a kind way. Encourage those being served to say, "Please," and, "Thank you."

**Aim Questions:** Make a scroll out of two rods and butcher paper, write the Aim Questions on it, and after the story, unroll it for each question.

**"Showing God's Love" Finger Play:**

God shows His love to me. *(Point to yourself.)*

I show God's love to you, *(Point at others.)*

By (sharing blocks and toys), *(Make a ball shape with your hands.)*

And speaking kindly, too. *(Point to your lips.)*

*Substitute other phrases for the words in parentheses, such as "taking turns with you" and "letting you choose first."*

**"Paul Tells of Jesus" Finger Play:**

Walking or riding a donkey *(Hold reins.)*

Or sailing through waves up and down. *(Make waves with hands.)*

Paul told the people of Jesus, *(Move arm across in front of body.)*

Traveling in cities and towns. *(Wave.)*

Paul got arrested and put in jail, *(Put wrists together.)*

But it didn't keep him from sending the mail. *(Lick envelope.)*

He wrote letters to encourage others, *(Write.)*

Saying, "Be kind to all of our brothers." *(Move arm across in front of body.)*

**"Philemon, Philemon, Where's Your Money?" Game:** Have one child sit in a chair with his back to the class and his eyes covered. Place a dollar bill under his chair. The rest of the class is sitting on the floor. Silently choose a child to go up and take the dollar bill and go back to his place and sit down on the dollar. The whole class says, "Philemon, Philemon, where's your money? Someone took it from your home!" The child on the chair gets up and looks at the class and guesses who he thinks took the money. Encourage everyone to stay seated and not to point at anyone. Repeat again after a couple of guesses or Onesimus is found.

**Onesimus Travel Sheet: (1PHM01ECGF6 and 1PHM01ECGF7)** Let the children color the GF6 sheet that shows Paul under arrest in Rome and Onesimus at Colossae. Cut along the line between the two cities. Have the children color both GF7 Onesimus figures, the one running away with a money bag and the one taking a letter back to Philemon. Glue the two Onesimus figures back to back around a popsicle stick or tongue depressor and stick it through the slit on the GF6 picture. Slide Onesimus along the paper slit between the two cities. Talk about Onesimus running away,

meeting Paul, hearing about Jesus, believing in Jesus, and returning with a letter to say he was sorry.

**Snack Time:** Talk about forgiving others and asking forgiveness when we do wrong. Talk about the things we do that need forgiveness, like getting angry, taking something that isn't ours, hitting, breaking something, saying something unkind to another person, etc. Serve something you would take on a long walk, like trail mix or peanut butter sandwiches.

**Follow the Leader:** Children stand in a circle while following your lead. Pat your knees, clap your ears, tap your neighbor's shoulder, tap your own shoulder, knock your knees together, shake a neighbor's hand, put your hands on both of your neighbor's shoulders, step three steps to the center, say, "I forgive you," and everyone join in a big forgiveness hug. Repeat with different actions but always end in a forgiveness hug.

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**Dirty Newsprint and Things that Need Forgiveness:** At tables, while discussing different actions and words that need forgiveness, ask children to rub newspaper print on their hands to make them dirty every time something is mentioned that is wrong. Provide baby wipes to make them clean when they ask "forgiveness" for the bad thing they did or said. This could be followed with snack time.

**Magic Slates:** While discussing things that we say and do that need forgiveness, write them on a slate as children mention them. As they say, "I'm sorry," allow them to lift the slate and be wiped clean of their sin. Talk about it not being easy to go and tell someone that you are sorry but that is what we have to do.

**Rhythm Sticks for Names and Verse:** Instruct the children on how to use the rhythm sticks. Hold them together until you tell the children to tap them together while you tap yours. Tap to the rhythm of the new names of the people in the Bible Adventure today. Talk about who they were and what they did. Also tap the rhythm of the memory verse after reciting it several times.

**Money and Letter Relay:** With the children divided into two teams, station them to start at Rome. Have a child carry a money bag to Colossae, get on his knees there as if praying and being forgiven of sins. Then have him pick up an envelope and return to Rome. At Rome the child should then say "I am sorry. Please forgive me." Have more than one money bag and envelope so a teacher can return them to the right place for another child to carry. The team that finishes first is the winner!

**"I'm Sorry" Spinner: (1PHM01ECGF8)** Around the edge of a paper plate, glue pictures of children doing things for which they need to say they are sorry and then to be forgiven. Attach a poster board spinner in the middle with a brad paper fastener.

### Songs:

**Onesimus Was a Runaway Slave** (tune: "Zacchaeus Was a Wee Little Man")  
O-ne-si-mus was a runaway slave, a runaway slave was he.  
He ran away from home to Rome, for he wanted to hide, you see.  
But when he heard the gospel preached, he bowed his head one day.  
Paul said, "Onesimus, you go back, and do what is right today.  
Yes, you do what is right today."


**Forgive** (tune: "London Bridge")  
Jesus tells us to forgive, to forgive, to forgive.  
Jesus tells us to forgive, and be kind.


**Be Kind** (tune: "Ring Around the Rosie")  
Be kind and tender-hearted.  
That is what the Lord said.  
Forgive and give a great big hug!

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### Took:

 **Lace Hearts: (1PHM01ECGF9)** Each child receives two hearts. Ask the children to color the disobedient Onesimus a dark color to show that Onesimus' heart was dirty with sin when he stole the money and ran away from home. Onesimus heard about Jesus, said he was wrong, and believed in Jesus who died for his sins. His dirty, sinful heart was changed to a clean heart. Onesimus still had to go and tell Philemon that he was sorry for the bad thing he had done. When we believe in Jesus, He does the same for us. Hold the hearts together and carefully punch holes around the edges of both at the same time. With yarn ends dipped in melted wax or wrapped with tape, let children lace the hearts together.

 **Pudding Bag Magic Slate:** In a quart-sized plastic bag, mix 1/4 cup milk and two tablespoons of instant vanilla pudding mix. Seal the bag well. Children play with the bag on a flat surface, spreading the pudding evenly inside the bag. With fingers, pretend to write a letter on it, a sad face for wrongs done, a happy face for forgiveness, and erase it clean. This could then be eaten with a spoon for snack time or taken home. Keep them in a cooler if used earlier in the class time.

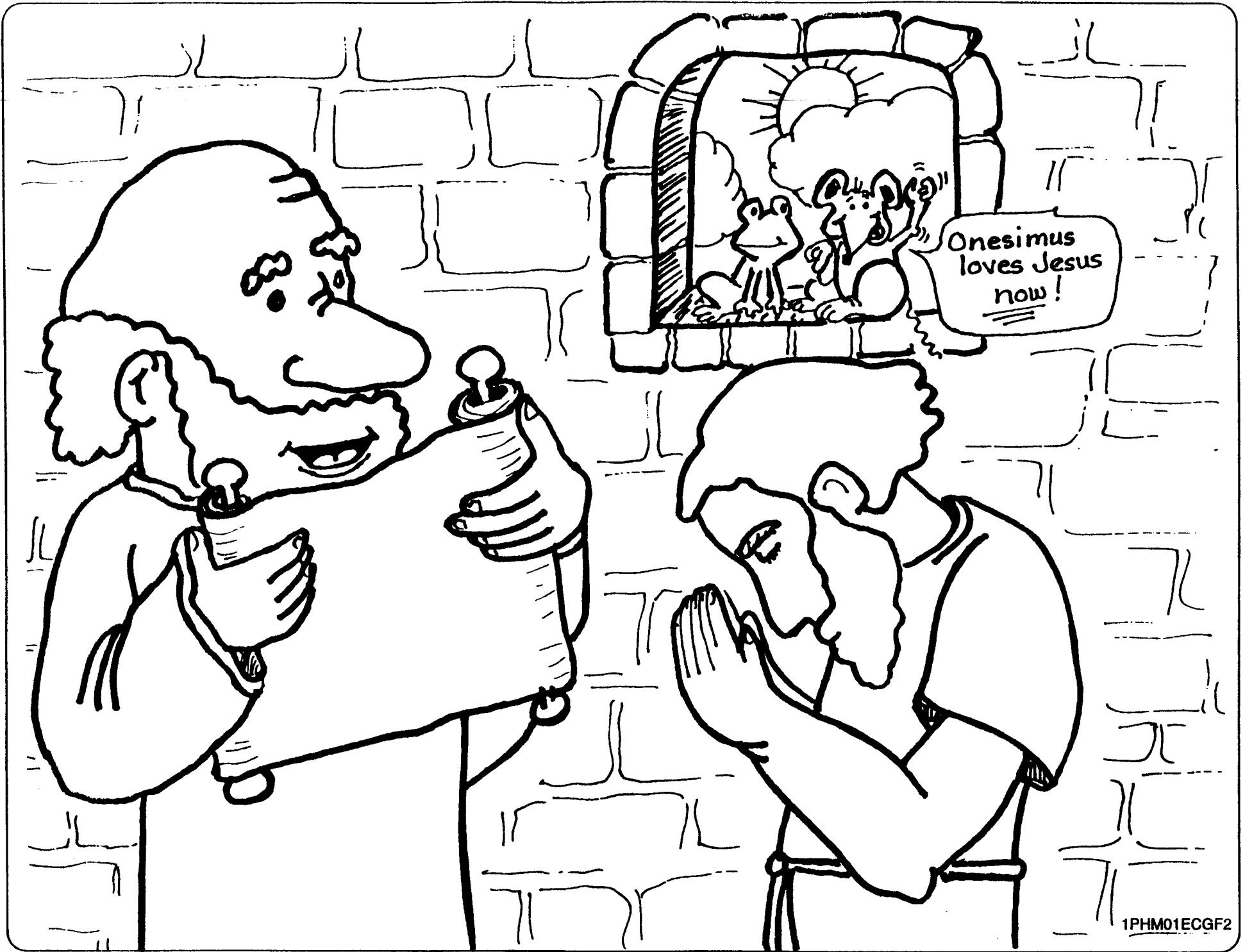
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④ **Forgiveness Story Page: (1PHM01ECGF5)** Use this simple story page to explain to the children what we do when we disobey and need forgiveness. Onesimus went back to Colossae and asked Philemon's forgiveness after he had asked Jesus' forgiveness. Philemon forgave because he loved Jesus. Sing, "Forgive," and, "Be Kind," to remind the children about how we deal with wrongs and hurts.



1PHM01ECGF1

While Paul was under house arrest in Rome, he talked to the guard about Jesus.



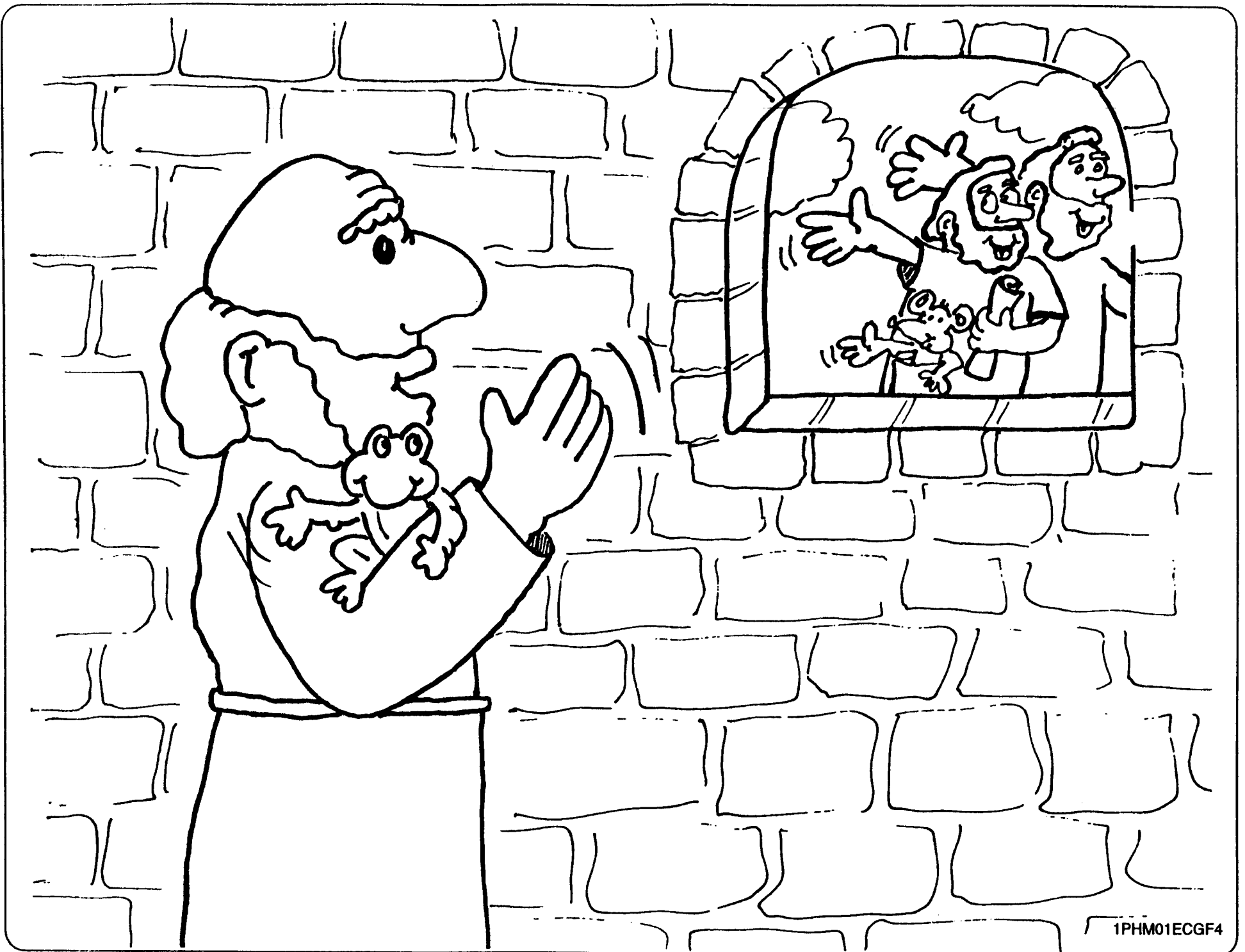
1PHM01ECGF2

Paul told Onesimus about Jesus. Onesimus believed in Jesus for forgiveness of sins.



1PHM01ECGF3

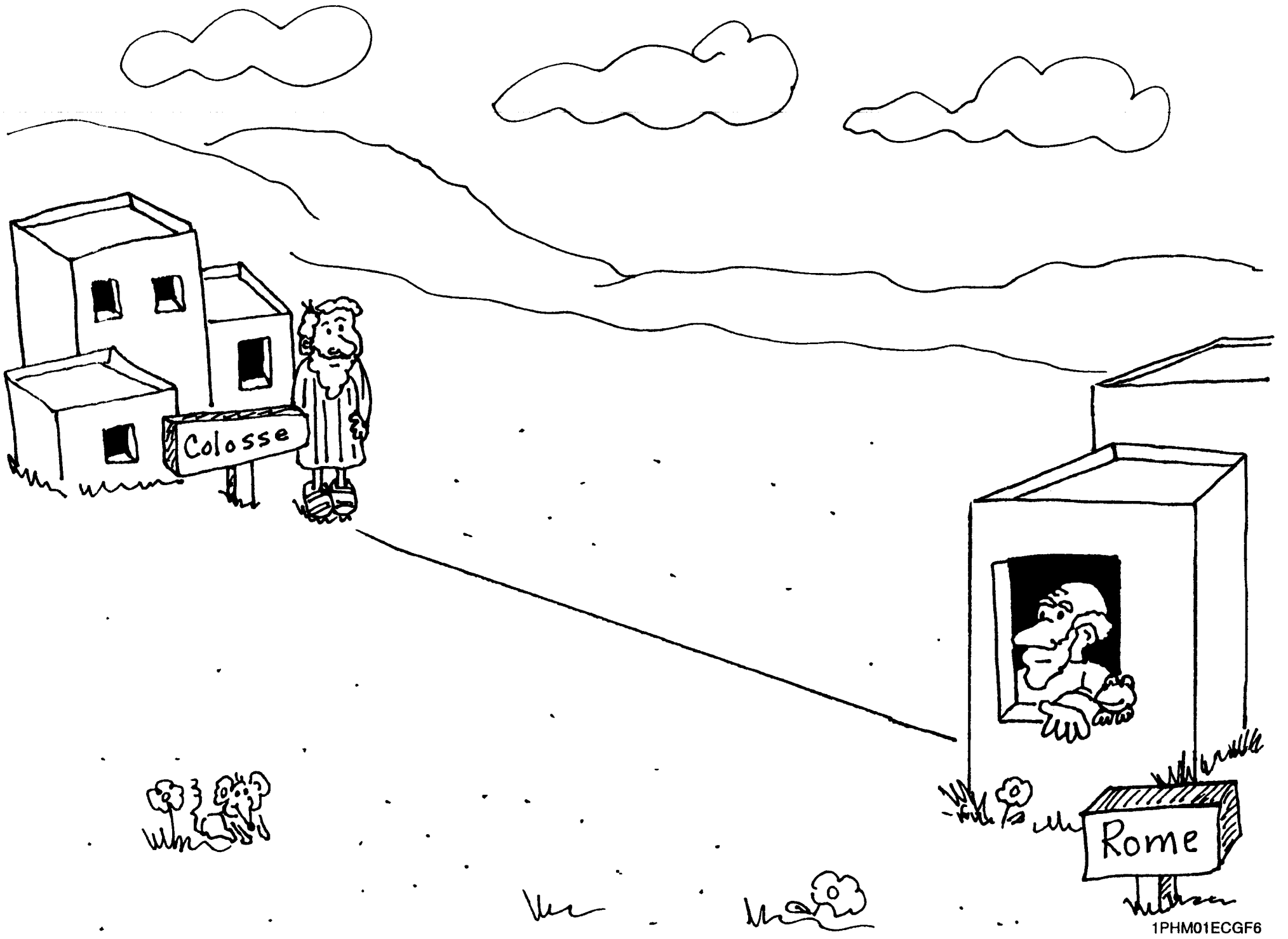
Paul wrote a letter to his friend, Philemon, asking him to forgive Onesimus.



1PHM01ECGF4

Paul sent Onesimus back to his master, Philemon, with a letter.

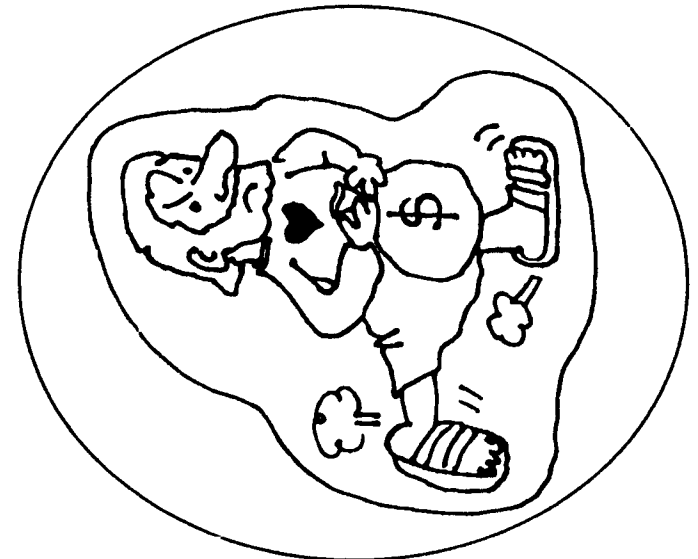
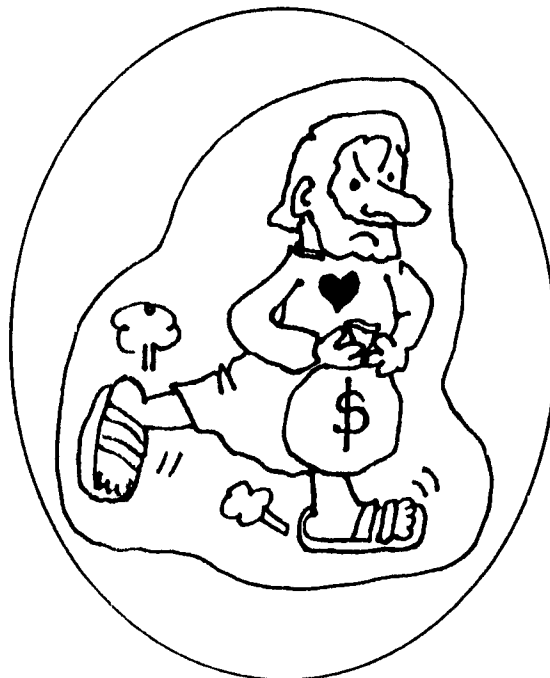
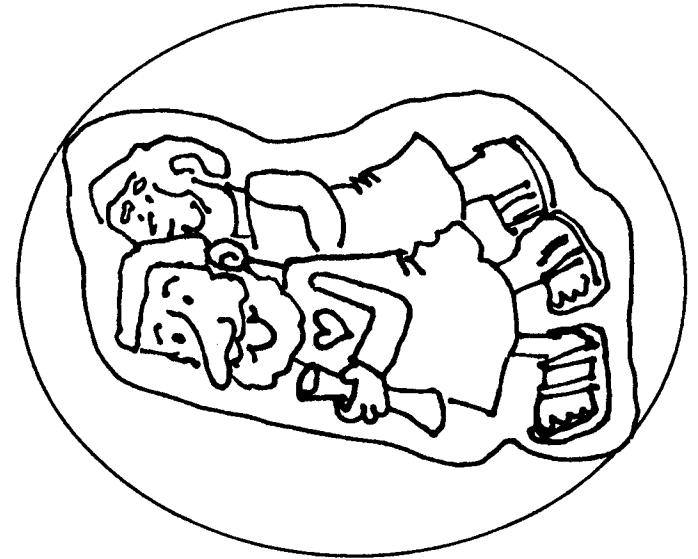
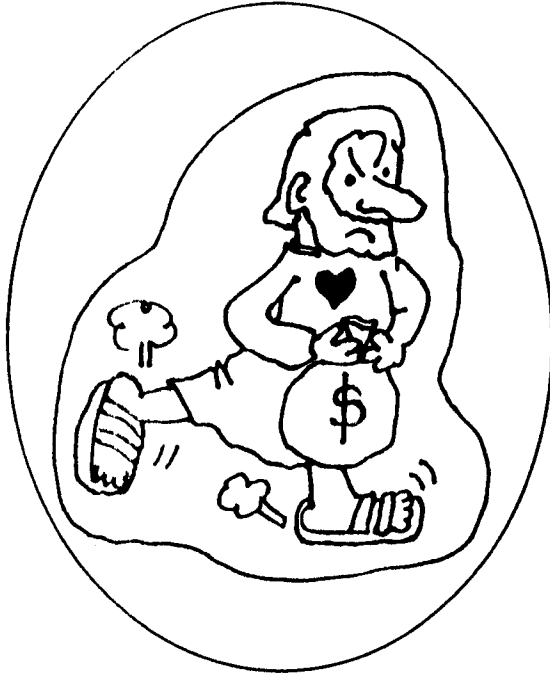




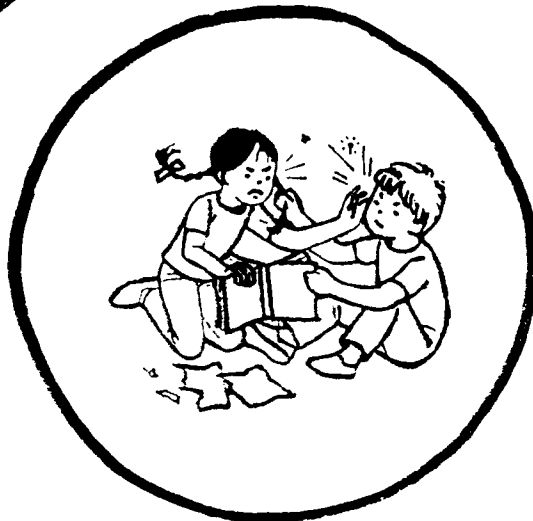
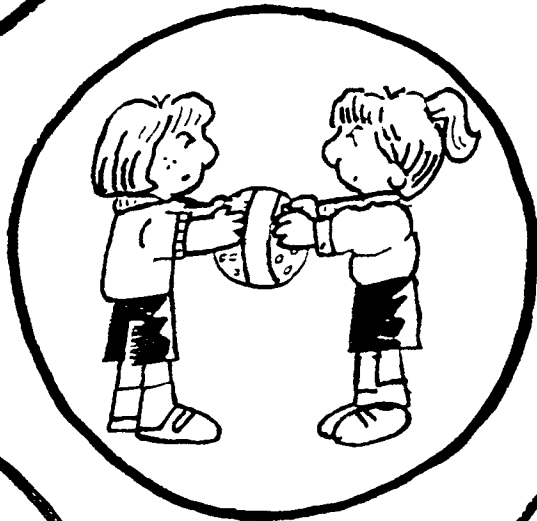
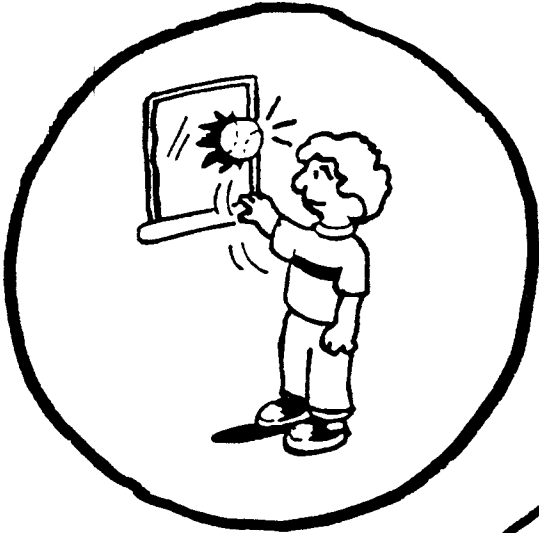
1PHM01ECGF6

Onesimus ran away from home to Rome. Paul told him about Jesus.

Onesimus stole money and ran away from home to Rome. Paul told him about Jesus, and he went back to Colossae to ask Philemon for forgiveness. Cut out the two Onesimus figures, glue them back to back around a popsicle stick, and move them back and forth on the 1COLO1ECGF6 path from Colossae to Rome.

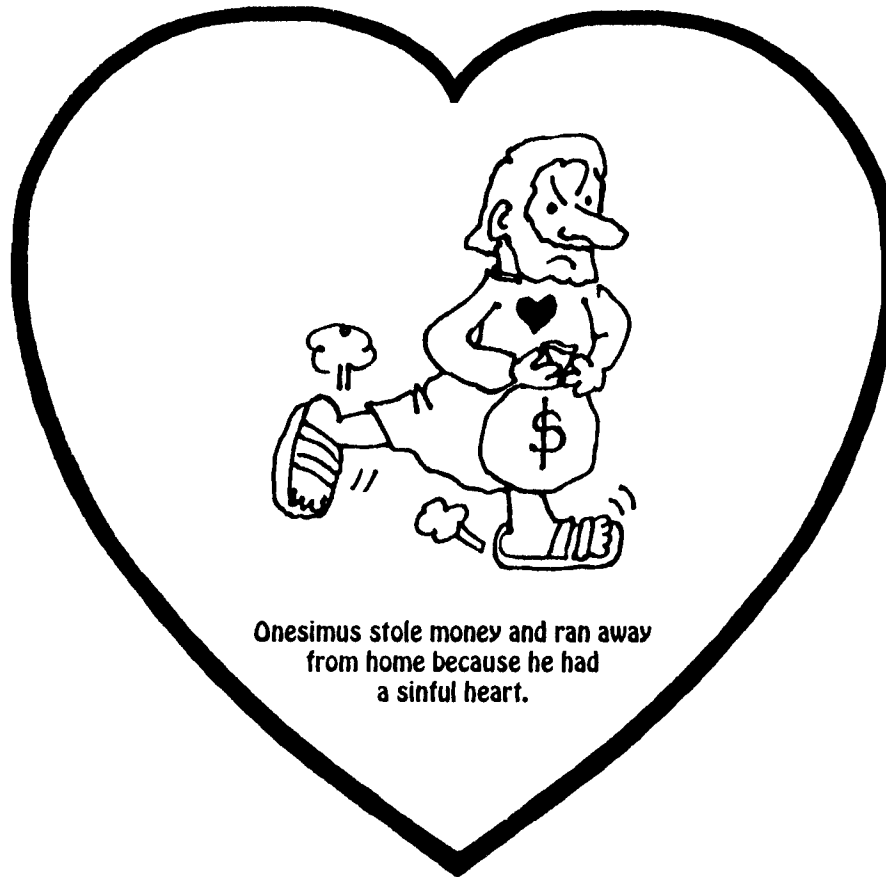


# I'm Sorry Spinner



# Lace Hearts

Each child receives two hearts. Ask the children to color the disobedient Onesimus a dark color to show that Onesimus' heart was dirty with sin when he stole the money and ran away from home. When Onesimus heard about Jesus and asked Jesus to forgive his sin, he had a clean heart that made him want to go back home to Philemon. Hold the hearts together and carefully punch holes around the edges of both at the same time. With yarn ends dipped in melted wax or wrapped with tape, let children lace the hearts together.





# Kindness Coupons

