



6TH GRADE

FOUNDATIONS

New Testament: The General Letters, Hebrews & Revelation

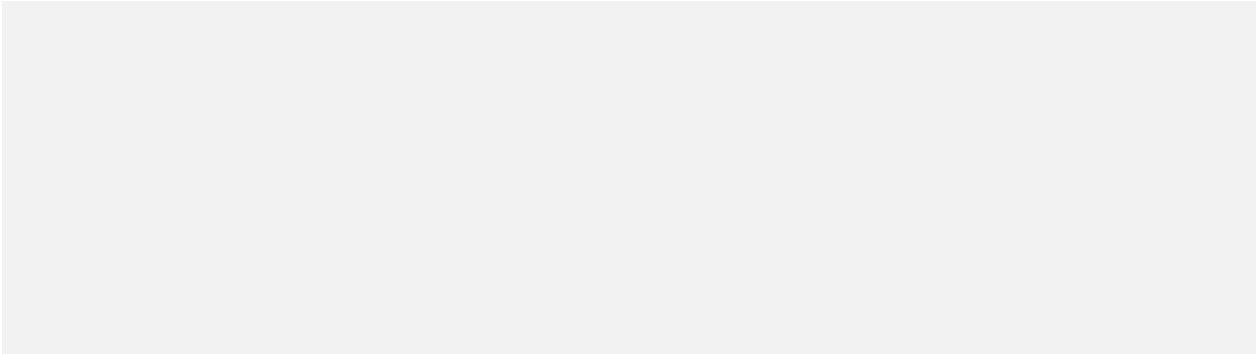
OVERVIEW

Have you ever heard the saying, “Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you’re gonna get?” Well, the general letters are a lot like a box of chocolates. No matter which one you turn to you will be surprised at what you discover! Generally speaking (lol), the reason these letters are called “general” is because they are not written to specific churches, instead either to individuals or regions of churches. They are written by disciples of Jesus, including two of Jesus’ brothers, Peter, and John, who were two of Jesus’ closest disciples. The topics throughout the letters range from suffering as a Christian to what an authentic faith looks like. Similar to the Pauline Epistles, these letters were written with specific questions and challenges the churches in these regions were facing. Each letter has a unique and beautiful flair, and the astonishing thing is, God wrote them with us in mind as well!

Hebrews and Revelation, actually, are the odd balls out! They are not exactly general letters, but they are similar in some ways. Hebrews is both a letter and a sermon! Revelation is considered apocalyptic, which means a revelation of unseen heavenly and future realities.

PARTNER UP!

Discuss with your partner a time you felt someone really understood your unique qualities or differences. Talk about the person you think knows you the best and why.



LARGE GROUP

Hebrews

- This sermon-letter was likely written with a Jewish audience in mind. Unfortunately, we are unsure of who wrote this book, but we can be sure it was someone who understood the Jewish faith well and who also saw Jesus as the true Son of God.
- The main goal for the author of Hebrews was to encourage Christians to hold fast to their faith because of who Jesus is and what he has done.
- The author explains parts of the Old Testament in light of Jesus, in order to convince and show that God had always planned to send his Son to die.

James

- James, the brother of Jesus, wrote his letter to churches outside of his immediate sphere of influence in Jerusalem.
- The main goal of the letter is for Christians to live out their faith and to be a “doer” of the word, not just a hearer.

1&2 Peter

- 1&2 Peter was written to churches throughout Asia Minor or modern day Turkey.
- Throughout the letter, Peter focuses on Christians who are suffering persecution, or being physically injured/attacked for believing in Jesus.
- He encourages them to endure it knowing that Jesus went before them in suffering and that God has a reward of joy in heaven for them.

- 2 Peter covers multiple topics, however the foundational teaching is that God’s grace transforms Christians and empowers us to live out our faith.

1st, 2nd, & 3rd John

- 1st John, while considered a letter, feels like a sermon in many ways.
- John, one of Jesus’ closest disciples, calls all believers back to three basics of the Christian life: true doctrine (or belief), obedient living, and an intense devotion to God.
- 2nd John is written to the “elect lady”, which is commonly understood to be a church, or group of Christians.
- John encouraged believers in this church to live in the love of God while being grounded in the truth of Jesus.
- 3rd John is written to Gaius, a friend of John’s. John encourages Gaius in the necessity of discipline within the church.

Jude

- Jude, written by another one of Jesus’ brothers, is directed to all believers.
- He encourages believers to defend truth and resist false teachings.

Revelation

- Revelation is considered Apocalyptic literature and was written by John (the same disciple who wrote the gospel John and the three letters mentioned above).
- In this genre of literature, or type of writing, future events are often the main topic, and symbols/metaphors are used regularly.
- Specifically, in Revelation John is given a vision of heaven and the future, which he records in this book.
- God and John both had a reason to share these visions to the church, and that was to fortify the church to resist the work of the devil and evil in general.

SMALL GROUPS

Look back through your notes and each letter. Which letter stood out to you the most and why?

Why do you think these “general letters” were written? What makes these books so unique? How does God address your uniqueness in these letters?

TAKE IT HOME

Pick one of the shorter books/letters (for example, 2&3 John or Jude), grab a sibling or parent and read it together in ONE SITTING! Yes, that's right! ONE sitting! You can read an entire book of the bible in under 5 minutes. Consider switching off every verse as you read! Afterwards, talk about what surprised you in the book and what you found interesting!