

# 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

# FOUNDATIONS

## *New Testament: Paul's Epistles (Romans – Ephesians)*

### OVERVIEW

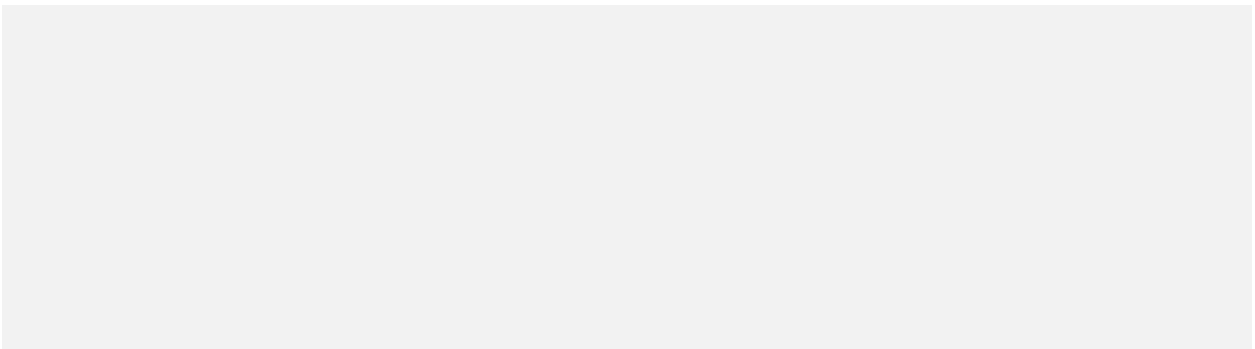
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“Epistle” is not a word we use every day. It means simply, letter, and is originally a Greek word. So, these epistles, or letters, are correspondence between Paul and Churches. Paul was one of the first missionaries, and he did the difficult work of planting and beginning many of these early churches. Throughout his ministry he would continue to send letters to these churches as a means of encouraging them, and even at time rebuking them. Each church faced unique challenges, and Paul did his best to address them in his letters. As churches received these letters they would copy them and send them out to other churches in the area, and the entire letter would be read to the entire group of Christians present. In the letters, Paul explains what Jesus did, what he accomplished, and why it matters for these churches and believers. Amazingly, God uses these letters to continue to teach us, encourage us, and challenge us.

### *WITH A PARTNER*

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Discuss with your partner a time you received an encouraging letter, text, or email! How did that make you feel and why?



# LARGE GROUP

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- I. Romans
  - Romans summarizes the gospel, or the good news of Jesus.
  - The focus of the book is justification – receiving the righteousness, or the record of the perfect life of Jesus, by faith.
  - Paul encourages the Romans to follow Jesus with joy because of what he did on the cross.
  
- II. 1 & 2 Corinthians
  - The church of Corinth had many problems and questions about how to live the Christian life.
  - Paul spends the first letter addressing the sins of the church and answering questions about marriage, spiritual gifts, and other topics.
  - In the second letter Paul defends his ministry and calling in Jesus, since the Corinthian believers had doubted his authority.
  
- III. Galatians
  - The believers in Galatia (a region, not a city), had begun to believe in a false gospel.
  - Paul redirects them, quite forcefully, back to the true gospel, which teaches that salvation is not by works but by faith alone.
  
- IV. Ephesians
  - Paul spent almost 3 years with the church of Ephesus. The group of believers at this church held a special place in his heart.
  - The letter to the Ephesians is overall very positive, which tells us that there weren't many problems occurring within the church.
  - Paul covers multiple topics, from the saving power of Jesus to the unity of the church.

# SMALL GROUPS

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Why did Paul have to write letters to various churches?

In these letters, Paul focuses on the work and person of Jesus. Why was that so important at the time? Why is it important to read about today?

What were some of the challenges that the churches faced? What does that tell us about churches today?

## TAKE IT HOME

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Here are two options you get to choose from!

1. Write a letter to either yourself or a family member, encouraging them in their faith and explaining something about Jesus to them. Feel free to give it to them or not!
2. Read the passage from 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 below. Discuss with your parents the importance of unity in the church. Ask them if they've seen division in the church and how they sought to reconcile it.

<sup>10</sup> I appeal to you, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. <sup>11</sup> For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. <sup>12</sup> What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." <sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?