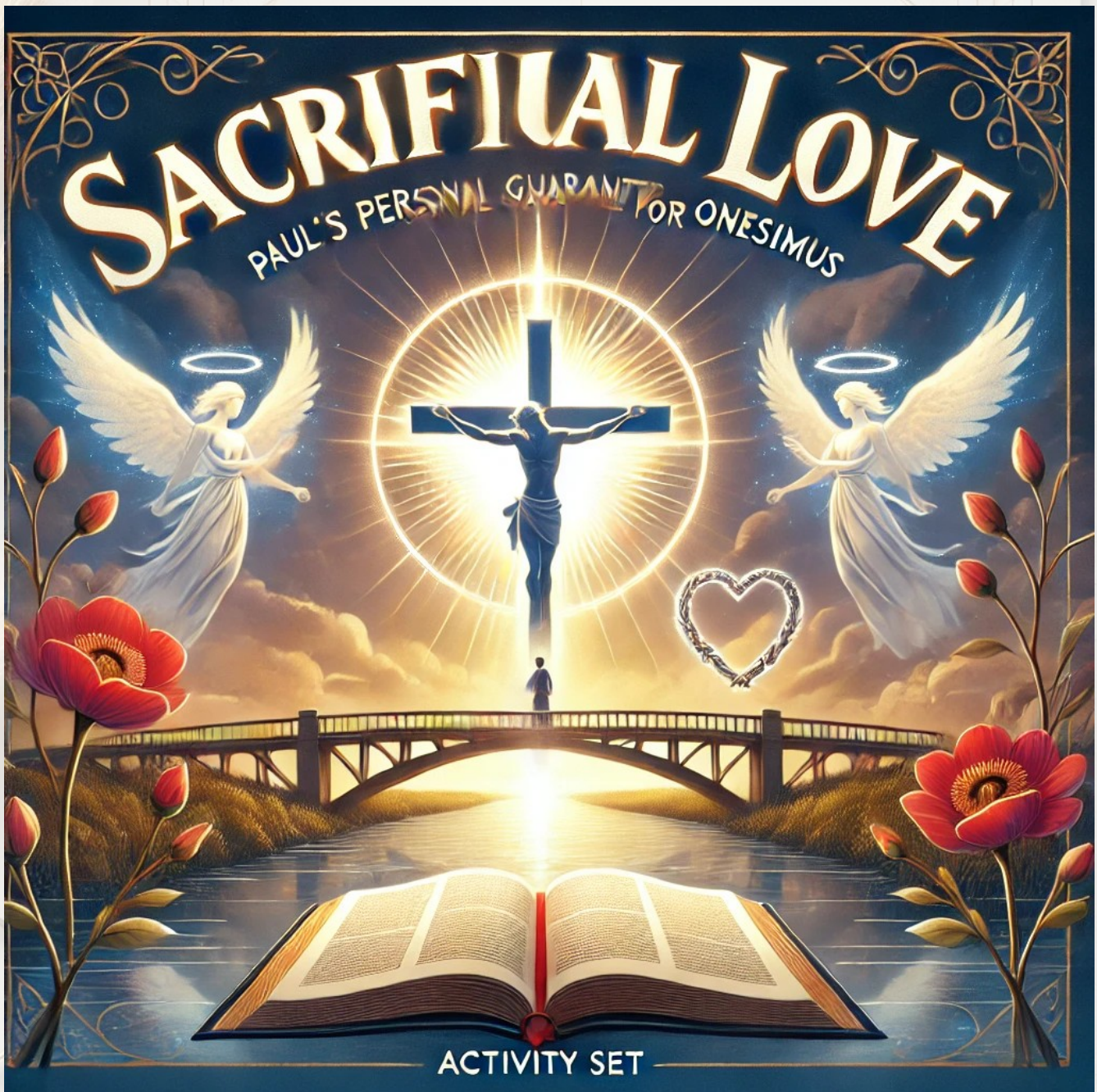




Activity and Summary Sheet: Sacrificial Love—Paul's Personal Guarantee for Onesimus

Reflect Christ's Love | Build Bridges of Forgiveness | Foster Reconciliation

This comprehensive activity and summary sheet explores the transformative power of sacrificial love as exemplified by Paul in his personal guarantee for Onesimus. Engage in reflective exercises, interactive activities, and meaningful discussions designed to deepen your understanding of Christ-like love. Learn how standing in the gap for others can foster healing, unity, and spiritual growth. Let this guide inspire a journey of restoration and reconciliation in your relationships and community.

ACTIVITY SHEET

Introduction

Blog Summary

The blog post reflects on Philemon 1:17-19, where Paul offers to personally guarantee the debts of Onesimus, showcasing a profound act of sacrificial love. Paul's appeal demonstrates the power of forgiveness, humility, and reconciliation in transforming relationships. By standing in the gap for Onesimus, Paul mirrors Christ's sacrificial love for humanity. This example calls believers to embrace sacrificial love in their interactions, fostering healing, unity, and spiritual growth in their communities. Through Paul's example, we are reminded to prioritize relationships over grievances, reflect God's grace, and actively seek restoration in all areas of life.

Key Verse

Philemon 1:17-19 (NIV): *"So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self."*

Reflection Questions

1. How does Paul's willingness to pay Onesimus' debt reflect Christ's sacrifice for us?
2. What does sacrificial love look like in your daily life?
3. How can we embody forgiveness and reconciliation in our relationships?
4. In what ways does standing in the gap for others help build unity in the community?
5. What practical steps can you take to reflect sacrificial love in strained or broken relationships?
6. How does embracing sacrificial love deepen your understanding of God's grace?

Section 1: Interactive Activities

1. Standing in the Gap Simulation

Objective: Illustrate the concept of sacrificial love and standing in the gap for others.

Materials Needed:

- Role-play scenario cards.
- Props (e.g., play money, a scale for fairness, or a "debt ledger").
- A cross symbol to signify Christ's ultimate sacrifice.

Instructions:

1. **Set the Scene:** Provide scenarios where one person owes a debt or has wronged another.
2. **Role-Play:** Assign roles (debtor, creditor, mediator). The mediator offers to "stand in the gap," resolving the issue with fairness and love.
3. **Debrief and Reflect:** Discuss how Paul's actions mirror Christ's sacrifice. Encourage participants to explore the emotional and spiritual impact of sacrificial love and its transformative power.

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2. Sacrificial Love Journal

Objective: Reflect on personal relationships and explore opportunities for sacrificial love.

Materials Needed:

- Journals or notebooks.
- Pens or markers.
- Printable prompts with Bible verses about love and reconciliation.

Instructions:

1. **Guided Reflection:** Participants journal about a time someone showed sacrificial love toward them and how it affected their relationship.
2. **Future Focus:** Write about someone in their life who may need support, forgiveness, or reconciliation.
3. **Commitment:** Conclude with a personal pledge to act in love and humility, noting specific actions they will take. Include a prayer for strength and guidance in carrying out these commitments.

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3. Debt Forgiveness Craft

Objective: Create a symbolic representation of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Materials Needed:

- Paper or cardstock.
- Scissors and glue.
- Markers.
- Envelopes.
- Decorative materials like stickers or glitter.

Instructions:

1. **Crafting the "Debt":** Participants write down relational or emotional "debts" (grievances, wrongs, or unmet expectations) on slips of paper.
2. **Forgiveness Envelope:** Decorate an envelope with words like "Forgiven," "Restored," and "Love." Add Bible verses that emphasize forgiveness, such as Colossians 3:13.
3. **Symbolic Act:** Place the slips into the envelope, symbolizing a decision to forgive and let go.
4. **Reflection and Sharing:** Discuss how this activity relates to Paul's actions and Christ's sacrifice. Allow participants to share their experiences and feelings about the process.

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Section 2: Family Discussion and Prayer

Family Discussion Guide

1. **Opening Question:** Can you share a time when someone stood in the gap for you or you did the same for someone else?
2. **Reflection:** How does Paul's example challenge us to live sacrificially?
3. **Action Plan:** Identify practical ways the family can embody sacrificial love in the community.
4. **Support System:** Discuss how family members can encourage and hold each other accountable in living out these principles.
5. **Role Play:** Practice using biblical language of forgiveness and reconciliation in real-life scenarios.

Family Prayer

Dear Lord, we thank You for the ultimate sacrifice of Your Son, who paid the debt we could never repay. Teach us to reflect this sacrificial love in our relationships, standing in the gap for others with humility and grace. Help us to forgive as You have forgiven us and to seek unity in all we do. May we grow closer to You through acts of love and reconciliation. Amen.

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Section 3: Additional Resources

Bible Study Tools

- **Bible Gateway:** Offers various translations and study tools to deepen understanding of Scripture.
- **Blue Letter Bible:** Provides access to commentaries, dictionaries, and concordances for in-depth study.
- **YouVersion Bible App:** Features reading plans focused on forgiveness and reconciliation.

Printable Activities

- **Role-Play Scenarios:** Pre-made cards for the "Standing in the Gap" simulation.
- **Sacrificial Love Journal Templates:** Prompts and layouts for reflective writing.
- **Debt Forgiveness Craft Templates:** Ready-to-use designs for creating envelopes and "debts."
- **Bible Verse Coloring Pages:** Printable pages featuring verses about sacrificial love and forgiveness.

Recommended Books

- *The Peacemaker* by Ken Sande.
- *Total Forgiveness* by R.T. Kendall.
- *Love Like That* by Les Parrott.
- *The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness* by Timothy Keller.
- *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No* by Dr. Henry Cloud.

Videos

- **"The Power of Sacrificial Love":** A teaching video on how love transforms relationships.
- **"Christ's Sacrifice and Our Call to Forgive":** Exploring the theology of forgiveness.
- **"Healing Through Reconciliation":** Practical examples of restoring broken relationships.
- **"Living Out the Gospel":** A motivational talk on embodying Christ's love in daily life.



Section 4: Reflective Wrap-Up

Family Pledge

We commit to reflecting Christ's sacrificial love in our relationships, standing in the gap for others, and seeking unity through forgiveness and grace. We will honor God by loving as He first loved us. Through every act of reconciliation, we aim to glorify Him.

Visible Reminder

Create a family "Debt Forgiveness Wall" featuring Scriptures, quotes, and personal stories of reconciliation. Add tokens or visuals representing debts forgiven and relationships restored. Place it in a common area as a testament to God's transforming love and grace. Incorporate weekly updates as new steps of reconciliation are achieved, fostering an ongoing culture of love and unity.

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