

NEW CLOTHES

by Carol Duerksen

KEY VERSE:

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
Col. 3: 14

FAITH STORY:

I Colossians 3:1-17

FAITH FOCUS:

Paul is telling the Colossian church to put to death in themselves the things that belong to the earthly nature. Now, as followers of Christ, they are to clothe themselves with "the new self" that is being renewed in the image of the Creator.

SESSION GOAL:

Encourage students to put to death their earthly nature and put on a Christ-like nature.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this session, the students will:

- Evaluate the "old clothes" (earthly nature) they are wearing.
- Contemplate the "new clothes" (Christ-like nature) they want to wear.
- Set some personal goals for putting on a Christ-like nature.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 Bibles for all students
- 2 A variety of clothes for students to "play dress up." Include an assortment of hats, shoes, dresses, pants, etc. Utilize your own collection as well as a local second-hand clothing store.
- 3 Newsprint and markers
- 4 Fabric scraps and scissors and permanent markers
- 5 Copies of the student worksheet and pens or pencils

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS: (5–7 minutes)

Welcome students and invite them to find some clothing items to wear that in some way represents who they are. When everyone is "dressed up," ask students to share why they chose that item.

CONNECT: (5–7 minutes)

Ask students to make another clothing choice—and that is to put on clothing items that in some way represents their Christian life right now. Invite them to share why they chose what they are wearing.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE: (10 minutes)

Invite students to turn to Colossians 3:1-17. Read through it together one time.

Divide into groups of 3-4 students and give each group newsprint and markers. Ask half of the groups to go through the passage and make a list of the earthly “old clothes” that Paul says Christians need to give up. Ask the other half of the groups to make a list of the Christ-like “new clothes” that Christians are to put on.

Brings groups together and share the lists. Post the lists on the wall.

APPLY: (10–15 minutes)

Invite students to choose a fabric scrap that they will be writing on. Ask them to study the list of new characteristics that Christians are to wear, and to choose one or two that they know they could work on in their life, and that they are willing to improve upon. They should write that characteristic on the fabric scrap.

Hand out the student worksheet and ask students to fill it out. When completed, ask students who truly want to work on this aspect of their lives and who are willing to have an “accountability partner” to meet with you after class or another time.

Teacher tip: *When you meet with these students, arrange for pairs of accountability partners. These pairs could be from within the class, or perhaps a student has a friend or adult outside of class that they could ask to help keep them accountable.*

RESPOND: (10 minutes)

Ask students to put on other clothing items that **do not** represent them at all—items that are as far as possible from something they’d want to wear.

When they are done, ask students to turn to the scripture passage in Colossians 3:5-9. Read it again together, and at the end of verse 9, ask students to take off the “dress up” clothes as a symbol of removing the earthly characteristics that need to be taken out of their lives.

Ask students to hold their fabric in their hands as you continue to read verses 10-17. Read slowly, with deliberation.

Encourage students to take their fabric and student worksheet home and use them as reminders of their commitment to wear “new clothes.”

Close with a prayer.

INSIGHTS FROM SCRIPTURE:

Paul begins this part of his letter by giving a set of ethical principals expressed first in the negative—“put to death,” “put away,” and “put off.” These are the elements of a life lived prior

to becoming followers of Jesus—and just as a person strips off dirty old clothes, so should these practices be stripped out of a person’s life and replaced with the new.

The new attitudes and actions are reflections of Christ. As God’s chosen ones—yes, even holy and beloved—the followers of Jesus are instructed to wear the clothes of love. Love binds all of the other characteristics together. Peacemaking is a natural outcome of this lifestyle.

If the peace of Christ truly reigns in our hearts, then becoming one body in Christ is possible despite our human imperfections.

Verse 16 summarizes the elements of a worship service—hearing and allowing the Word to dwell in them, teaching and admonishing each other, and singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

Finally, verse 17 wraps it all up. All of life—all words and all deeds—should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, with thanksgiving to God.

STUDENT WORKSHEET:

- 1 Name the “new clothing” that you want to put on (one or more of the Christ-like characteristics listed in Colossians 3:12-17.)

- 2 HOW will you change?

- 3 WHO else is involved?

- 4 WHAT do you need to start (or stop) doing?

- 5 WHAT will you do differently today? Tomorrow?

- 6 Are you willing to put this into practice and have another person who will help keep you accountable?