

# UNCERTAIN GROUND

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## CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Paper, pens or pencils
- Copies of the downloadable “622 service” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes
- A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

## ICE BREAKER: UNSCRAMBLE (NAUTICAL + BEYOND)

Write out the following scrambled words for the teens to unscramble together as they arrive. (They are all related to tools that keep ships and land vehicles from drifting or heading in the wrong direction).

- DRAAR (Radar)
- CHOARN (Anchor)
- SPAM (Maps)
- SPAMSOC (Compass)
- LEEECTSOP (Telescope)
- SKRABE (Brakes)
- GHOULITHSE (Lighthouse)
- PSG (GPS)

DEPENDING ON YOUR GROUP, YOU MIGHT ASK YOUR STUDENTS TO WORK ON THE WORDS INDIVIDUALLY ON THEIR OWN PAPERS AND COMPETE FOR SPEED, OR HAVE THEM WORK TOGETHER ON DIFFERENT WORDS AS TEAMS.

## 622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

## DISCUSSION: READY... STEADY...

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- What sorts of things can make you feel unsteady? What can you do about it?
- Do you have a story about a time when you got confused or maybe fainted? How did you feel? What happened?

*A few things worth pointing out (if they don’t otherwise arise during the discussion):*

- *There are plenty of things that can cause us to be off-balance, both physically and emotionally. Perhaps you’ve had the experience of being so nervous that your legs felt like jelly. Or perhaps you’ve experienced dehydration or a fever that made it hard for you to remain standing and alert. In many cases, these symptoms call for drinking fluids, ensuring that the body has nutrients and getting some rest in a quiet, comfortable place.*

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- *Perhaps you've been for an operation where the anesthetic made you really groggy. Or perhaps you've experienced an illness that came on very suddenly. Hopefully you had people nearby who could help take care of you and ensure that you had what you needed to recover. This is a great opportunity to share a story of your own.*

## THE LESSON: COLOSSIANS 2

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

(IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP RESPOND TO QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE RAISED DURING THIS UNIT, WE RECOMMEND "DISCOVERING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER: A HANDS-ON APPROACH, VOLUME 3: SPECIAL OCCASIONS" BY SUE CARELESS.)

In the year 1662, a then-new section was added to the Prayer Book called "Forms of Prayer to be Used at Sea". These prayers were specifically written with the dangers and struggles of sailors in mind. But you don't have to be a sailor to appreciate this collection of prayers, because you don't have to be a sailor to understand the temptation to give up when things get hard, or the loneliness of being away from home, or the danger of facing down "enemies". Throughout our lives there are seasons of transition, uncertainty and crisis; times of loneliness and longing. In all of these moments, wherever we are, we can turn to God, the one who will "never leave us nor forsake us" (Hebrews 13:5).

When life is at its most turbulent, it is then that we need to have roots that go deep. How do we get these "deep roots"? We spend time each day with God in prayer and in his Word, and we keep as close as possible to other faithful believers who can offer us encouragement and accountability.

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While the Apostle Paul was in prison he wrote several letters to churches which we now call "the prison epistles". These letters are filled not with concern for himself, but for the churches, that even in his absence the believers would be "rooted", "built up", and "established".

Refer to Colossians 2:1-15.

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS' NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they've just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- Take a look at verse 1. For whom was the Apostle Paul expressing concern?
- What were the Colossians getting right?
- What specific threat to faith is mentioned in this passage?
- How did Paul want the Colossians to prepare themselves for this threat?
- What can we learn from this today?

*A few notes and reflections for reference:*

- *The Apostle Paul was concerned for the Colossian Christians (whom it is likely he had never actually met), as well as those believers at Laodicea and elsewhere – all whom had not seen him "face to face" (v1). He followed this up by making clear that he wanted them to be encouraged, unified in love, confident, growing and strong in their faith. He wanted to see them mature to the point that their lives would show "fruit" and that they would be unmoved by false teaching.*

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- *The Colossian believers had “received Christ Jesus the Lord” (v6), and all that this meant – they’d been made alive together with Christ, had been forgiven their trespasses, and were beneficiaries of the victory of Christ over the power of evil (v13-15). Paul also referred to their “good order” and “firm faith” (v5).*
- *Paul was concerned that the Colossians, if they did not mature in their faith, might be deceived by false teaching. He was clear about the convincing nature of some of the false teachings. In verse 4 he called them “plausible arguments” and later referred to “philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition” (v8). The broader passage indicates that the false teaching which had cropped up with the Colossians was a form of Gnosticism that combined philosophy with Old Testament legalism and taught that the material world was evil (see Colossians 2:16-23). Paul was making clear that this sort of man-made “wisdom” cannot stand up against what God (who made the world) has revealed to be true. Or, as he wrote in 1 Corinthians: “the wisdom of this world is folly with God” (3:19).*
- *Paul wanted the Colossians to know that his letter was rooted in concern for their spiritual health (v1-5). He wanted them to understand clearly who Jesus was, and what he had accomplished for them (v9-15). They had made a good start, but they needed to move on from “receiving” the Lord Jesus to “walking in him” so that they would be “rooted”, “built up” and “established” in the faith (v6-7).*
- *Like the Colossians, we live in a world where many false messages are coming at us all the time. In order to recognize that these messages are contrary to the Gospel, we need to be “rooted” and mature in our faith, knowing the one on whom our faith is founded, and understanding what it is that he has done for us. The issues and arguments change, but our Lord is “the same yesterday, today and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8).*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON'T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU'LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

## PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

**Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.**

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

At the end of the Catechesis in the Prayer Book is a “Supplementary Instruction”. And at the end of the “Supplementary Instruction” we find the following words (below). *It should be noted that the words “he” and “him” are meant to refer to everyone, including the “shes” and the “hers”.*

*Every Christian man or woman should from time to time frame for himself a RULE OF LIFE in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel and the faith and order of the Church; wherein he may consider the following:*

*The regularity of his attendance at public worship and especially at the holy Communion.*

*The practice of private prayer, Bible-reading, and self-discipline.*

*Bringing the teaching and example of Christ into his everyday life.*

*The boldness of his spoken witness to his faith in Christ.*

*His personal service to the Church and the community.*

*The offering of money according to his means for the support of the work of the Church at home and overseas. (BCP PAGE 555)*

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Take some time this week to review this list, and seek God’s guidance in establishing (or re-establishing) for yourself a “rule of life”.

- AND/OR -

Leaving home for the first time, perhaps for post-secondary studies, can often be a time of “uncertain ground”. The following prayer comes from the “Family Prayer” section of the Prayer Book and is simply called “For One Leaving Home”. Take some time to pray with the words of the prayer, adding aloud the names of anyone known to you for whom you’d especially like to pray:

*O God, the refuge and strength of all who put their trust in thee: Unto thy gracious care and keeping we commit thy servants \_\_\_\_, now going forth from us. Give them courage, prudence, and self-control; raise up for them good friends; preserve them from loneliness; keep them, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence, and make them have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP PAGE 733)*

## CLOSING PRAYERS (622 AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE “PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS” SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU’RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the “Grace”, the final prayer in the booklet.

## COLOSSIANS 2: **ROOTED. BUILT UP. ESTABLISHED.**

<sup>1</sup>For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, <sup>2</sup>that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ, <sup>3</sup>in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. <sup>4</sup>I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. <sup>5</sup>For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

<sup>6</sup>Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

<sup>8</sup>See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. <sup>9</sup>For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, <sup>10</sup>and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. <sup>11</sup>In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, <sup>12</sup>having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup>by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup>He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.