SESSION 6
LEAD IT: MIDDLE SCHOOL

GOALS

As students experience this session in Colossians, they will…

- discover a hefty set of commands in chapter 3.
- make the connection between gratitude for what God has done for us and obedience to what He asks of us.
- be challenged to adopt these commands as a way of life.

MATERIALS: Group

- a white board and colored pencils

MATERIALS: Each Student

- student journal pages for Session 6
- Colossians Scripture sheets
- a Bible, pen, and notebook

Prayer
Once your students have gathered, give them a moment to exhale the pressures of the day. Then pray that God will take the group to a new level of obedience with today's study.

Review
To stay connected to the big themes in Colossians, ask a few review questions.

What was God's big secret?
He intended for the Gentiles to be part of the plan all along. Through Jesus, Israel's Messiah, He was going to bring together Jews and Gentiles to establish the Church.

What were the five eras of God's plan that we looked at?
- *The mystery was in place before time began.*
- *God gradually rolled things out to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, choosing them and their offspring (Israel) to someday be a blessing to all nations.*
- *God let Israel know that someday everyone (including Gentiles) would get to enjoy the promises of God—that is, without first becoming a member of Israel.*
- *Jesus began His ministry by going to the lost sheep of Israel. He concluded His earthly ministry by sending His apostles to all nations (Gentiles) and establishing the Church (the people, not the building), in which His Spirit would dwell.*
- *Mystery explained: Jesus is the point of the mystery! The coming of the Messiah is how God made the offspring of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob a blessing to all peoples.*

What does understanding this mystery do for us?
It keeps us from being deceived by fine-sounding arguments.

Bonus Question: Who was the first person ever to get in on God's secret?
Abraham

OPEN

Option: The Adverbly Game

The Adverbly Game is a fun variation of charades. Choose one person to leave the room or go to a place where they can't hear. The remaining students in the room choose an adverb, one that describes how you might do something. An easy way to think of an adverb for this game is to think of words that end in -ly (for example*, excitedly, chivalrously*, or *mysteriously*). Let's say the players choose "chivalrously." Call "the guesser" back into the room. The guesser's task is to guess the adverb by having other players act it out. The guesser can call up any number of players in the room, give them any scenario (For example: you are all at a dance, you are going through a drive through, you are talking on the phone) and then tell them to act it out in the style of whatever adverb they've chosen.

Players can get creative as to how they act out the style of the adverb. For example, "chivalrously" could be acted out by being extra courteous on their phone call, or the actor/actress could pretend to pick up the phone and say something like, "Good lady, what dost thou require? Might there be some dragon that I may slay for thy fair hand?" The guesser can call up new actors and create a new scenario at any time if the current acting isn't helping. It's also up to the guesser to decide how detailed the scenarios are. The guesser can give players specific roles, like "Chloe, you're a flight attendant, and Andy, you're a businessman traveling to Europe. Act out flying on the plane in the style of the adverb."

As soon as the adverb is guessed, the round ends and another player leaves the room, then the game starts again. It's often fun to choose obscure or less well known adverbs that will be harder to guess (for example, instead of something like happily, try enthusiastically or whole-heartedly).

Play a few rounds of the game and for the last scenario use the adverb "gratefully" to transition into the study. You can always play a few more rounds if you have time at the end of the session.

Transition into the study by having a short brainstorm discussion on these questions:

> **How do you respond when someone does something nice for you out of the blue—a "random act of kindness"?**
>
> **How would you define gratitude?**
>
> **What's the best way to express gratitude?**
>
> **Can you fake gratitude? If so, how?**
> *Use this question to distinguish between saying you're grateful (words) and showing your gratitude (deeds). Actions are the true indication of gratitude. If you played the adverbly game, make the connection that gratefulness was acted out using certain words and deeds to convey this feeling.*

DIGGING IN

Before diving into Colossians, explain this pattern in Paul's letters:

> **Paul usually spends a large section teaching about all God has done for us through Jesus. In the shorter letters, like Colossians, this takes up the first half of the book. Then Paul shifts gears and spends the second half of the book describing the behavior grateful people should display based on all he's described. In this session, we hit that transition in Colossians.**

Give your students a chance to review their journal pages from sessions 2-4 if they are handy. See if they can dig out a few key things God has done for them through Jesus.

Then ask students to designate a symbol they could use to mark the instructions and commands in Colossians. (If they're short on ideas, suggest a megaphone, a bold exclamation point, or two stone tablets.)

For this exercise you may choose to have your students work individually, in small groups, or as one large group depending on what works best for your students.

Have them read Colossians 3:1–17 from their Scripture sheets and do this:

- **Mark every instruction or command you find with the symbol we designated.**

When most have finished, explain that this chapter is a mini-version of Paul's other letters in that most of the commands are linked to something that's been done for us by God.

Ask students to read the passage a second time and do this:

- **Using a different color, underline the reminders of things God did for us. Key words to look for include "since," "for," and "therefore."**

TAKING IT INWARD

After most have finished, direct your group to the chart in their journal pages for Session 6. Explain that you will be working through most of the chart as a group. In the middle column, they will be listing every command that's connected to a reminder (these are already noted in the left column). If a command doesn't seem to be connected to a reminder, still list it in the last row of the chart.

After you have recorded all the commands, explain that the right column is where it gets personal. Ask them to rate themselves on a scale from 1 to 5 as to how well they're doing at keeping each command.

The exercise is printed below for leader reference.

Reminders	Commands	My 1-5 Rating
I've been raised with Christ. (v. 1)	*-Set your heart on things above. (v. 1)* *-Set your mind on things above, not earthly things. (v. 2)*	
I died and my life is now hidden with Christ in God. (v. 3)	*-Put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature. (v.5)* *-Rid yourself of such things as: anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language. (v. 8)*	
I've taken off my old self and put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of God. (v. 9-10)	*-Don't lie to each other. (v. 9)*	
We're all in Christ; there is no Greek or Jew; Christ is all and is in all (v. 11) We're God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved. (v. 12)	*-Clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (v. 12)* *-Bear with each other. (v. 13)* *-Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. (v. 13)* *-Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (v. 13)* *-Put on love, which binds all these virtues together in perfect unity. (v. 14)*	

As members of one body we're called to peace. (v. 15)	*-Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart. Be thankful. (v. 15)* *-Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. (v. 16)* *-Teach and admonish one another with all wisdom as you worship with gratitude in your hearts to God. (v. 16)* *-Whatever you do, do it all in Jesus' name, giving thanks to God through Him (v. 17)*	

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

Call your students back together after they have had a few minutes to rate themselves and discuss the following questions.

Which command(s) did you rate the lowest?

Optional: Have each student write down their lowest ranked command on a scrap piece of paper and hand it in to you. Tally up the rankings and display them on the whiteboard and discuss these rankings. This allows students who may feel too embarrassed to share what they are struggling with a safe way to share those struggles and more than likely realize they are not alone in that struggle.

Which command(s) convicted you the most? Did any personal situations come to mind?

What do you think things would be like around here if we took these commands seriously? (Think about personal interaction, ministry potential, and the way outsiders view the group.)

Point out the chart on their journal pages entitled "One Thing." Ask them to choose two commands—either the two most convicting, the two that scored lowest, or their top two priorities—and write these in the left column. Give them a few minutes to pray and think about one specific action they could take in the next 24 hours, in order to obey each command. They should write that action in the right column.

Then ask any volunteers to share one of their actions.

Use a few of the following questions to help your students take Colossians 3:1–17 to heart.

Agree or disagree? If these reminders don't cause a wave of gratitude to come over us, then we're out of touch with what God has done in our lives!

If your gratitude for what God has done for you is measured by how well you measure up to Colossians 3, how grateful are you?

When a group of believers obeys these instructions, a whole lot of love, honesty and forgiveness is generated. It's an atmosphere you can't find anyplace else on earth! So on a scale from 1 to 10, how willing are you to do what it takes to generate this atmosphere?
(Poll the group and average their responses. You may choose to do a "secret ballot" poll and have the group submit their rating on a scrap piece of paper or have everyone close their eyes and display their rating by holding up corresponding number of fingers.)

If the average score was between 1 and 5, ask:

> **Why so low? Do we want that kind of atmosphere? What is it we're not willing to give up to get there?**

If the average score was between 6 and 10, ask:

> **What can we start doing right now to be a Colossians 3 group?**

Emphasize the following to your students:

> **It's easy to want the invigorating atmosphere, especially since it can cause our group to grow in numbers. And it's easy to make a list of these commands and enjoy clicking them off as we do them. But the real motivator for being the people God wants us to be is gratitude for what God has done for us.**

Give your students time to write something (maybe a reminder/command from Colossians 3) as their Colossians Takeaway. Suggest that they choose something that raises their gratitude level and motivates them to express that gratitude with a new kind of behavior.

If you have time, play a few more rounds of The Adverbly Game. Pick adverbs to guess that can be found in Colossians (mysteriously, Apostle Paul-ly, powerfully, invisibly, truthfully, faithfully). There are also some other great closing option ideas for this session listed on the INNERgized web help page if you have time for them (see the instructions of your Leader Prep book for web help access).