

RESPOND PHILEMON

look

- Color in the imagery of the page, reflecting on the words, "I am sending him, who is my very heart, back to you" (Philemon 1:12).

reflect

- Read through Paul's letter once again, noting each time he expresses an ethic of love above law. What does it look like to live out an ethic of love above law in your own life?

- In the Roman Empire, to accept a runaway or delinquent slave back home without punishment was nothing short of absurd. To accept him back as a "beloved brother" would have provoked a significant amount of social sacrifice and shame. What does Paul risk by sending this request?

- Imagine Paul's letter is addressed to the modern day church. Who are the Onesimus's in our midst? Who are the ones deemed "useless", or delinquent who need to be welcomed into the beloved community?

write

Look up and read the poem, *[i carry your heart with me (I carry it in)]*, by e.e. cummings. Compare the sentiment of this poem to Paul's message to Philemon. Then, in the space below, write a letter or poem of endearment to someone to whom you feel called to welcome.

pray

May we have the courage to welcome home all who are enslaved in our midst. Amen.

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