



LESSON 97: FORGIVENESS

PAUL'S CONVERSION AND BAPTISM

Acts 9:1–25, 22:6–16

PAUL'S CONVERSION AND BAPTISM



- ♦ Acts 9:1–25, 22:6–16
- ♦ Big Picture Q&A: How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.
- ♦ Key Passage: Ephesians 2:8–9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

JESUS CONNECTION



Jesus appeared to Saul and changed him inside and out. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). Jesus called Saul, also known as Paul, who was once an enemy to Christians, to spend the rest of his life telling people the gospel and leading them to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

FORGIVENESS – Letting go of a grudge against someone who has wronged me.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Saul was no stranger to religion. He grew up in a religious household. He was a devout Jew who was born in Tarsus (Phil. 3:5) and inherited his Roman citizenship from his father. So, when people began talking about this man named Jesus and claiming that He was the promised Messiah, Saul was defensive.

Saul believed strongly in the Jewish faith of his ancestors. He violently persecuted God's church and tried to destroy it (Gal. 1:13–14). He dragged believers from their houses and put them in prison. He approved of the stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Saul thought he was doing the right thing by defending Judaism, but God's purposes could not be stopped. As Saul was on his way to arrest believers in Damascus, the Lord stopped him in his tracks.

Jesus revealed Himself to Saul, and Saul was never the same. He was struck blind and led into Damascus, where a believer named Ananias placed his hands on Saul. Suddenly, Saul could see again. Saul was convinced that Jesus is Lord. Saul later described the experience as being like dying and receiving a new life (Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:17).

God had a purpose and a plan for Saul. He had set Saul apart before Saul was even born (Gal. 1:15). God said, "This man is My chosen instrument to take My name to the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15).

Jesus changed Saul's life. As you teach, clarify that conversion happens when a person recognizes his sin, repents, believes in Jesus and confesses Jesus as Savior and Lord. Jesus changes a person's heart, and as a result, his life is changed too.

Jesus appeared to Saul and changed him inside and out. Jesus called Saul, who was once an enemy of Christians, to spend the rest of his life telling people the gospel and leading them to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

The Bible is made up of smaller stories that all fit together to tell one big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus. After Jesus' death and resurrection, He ascended to Heaven. The Holy Spirit came down on Jesus' followers, giving them power to carry out Jesus' command to make disciples. The early church began, and more and more people believed in Jesus every day.

In our last lesson, we learned about Peter and a Roman soldier named Cornelius. God gave Peter a vision. What did Peter see in the vision? (*All kinds of animals being let down in a blanket.*) Why did God show Peter this vision? (*He wanted Peter to know that God didn't view any person as better than another.*) What happened when Peter shared the good news about Jesus with Cornelius and all the people in his house? (*They accepted the message, the Holy Spirit entered them and they were baptized.*) Our Bible story today is about a man named Saul, who was also called Paul, and how he met Jesus.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Spot the Differences (Older Students)

- ◆ Form pairs and give each pair a "Spot the Differences" printable. Challenge partners to see how many differences they can find between the two pictures. To make it more competitive, set a timer for one minute (or longer, if desired) and see which pair of students finds the most differences before the time runs out.
- ◆ Today's Bible story is about a man who met Jesus and was completely changed! His change probably wasn't obvious on the outside, but his actions and attitude proved his heart was different.

Blind Catch (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Instruct the class (or select a few volunteers) to line up side by side along a wall. Stand at the opposite wall and toss table tennis balls to the students. See how many of the balls they are able to catch. Then, blindfold the players and repeat the process. How many balls were they able to catch the second time?
- ◆ Losing your sight would make many parts of life difficult. In our story today, we will learn about a time God blinded a man who hated Jesus.

Introduction Clues (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Read the clues one at a time. Challenge the class to guess the identity of the person described. End with the descriptions of the Apostle Paul.
 - ◇ Walked with God; was the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth; obeyed God and built an ark (*Noah*)
 - ◇ Lived about 1,000 years before Jesus was born; second king of Israel; father of King Solomon (*David*)
 - ◇ Lived in Nazareth; praised God with a song; mother of Jesus (*Mary*)

- ✧ Tried to destroy the church; became a missionary for Jesus; wrote much of the New Testament (*the Apostle Paul*)

- ◆ Have you ever heard about the Apostle Paul? Early in his life, Paul was better known by another name: Saul. Today, we are going to hear the story of how Paul met Jesus.

People Change (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Distribute photos of yourself and one other adult teacher or volunteer from various stages of life among the students in your group. Invite the class to guess who is pictured in each. Ask them to sort the pictures based on the approximate age in the photo, identity or other attributes. Discuss the ways the people in the photos changed over time. Invite students to discuss ways they expect to change as they grow up.
- ◆ People are expected to change in some ways over time, like their height and the kinds of clothing they wear. In other ways, like eye color, people probably won't change over time. Then, there are ways that God can help us change over time, like how much we love Him and how well we obey Him. Today, we will learn about a man who had his life changed in a very big way. This man hated Jesus, but God planned to completely change that.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Ephesians 2:8-9

For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

Sticky Note Challenge (Older Students)

- ◆ Show the key passage poster and read it aloud together. Allow a volunteer to cover part of the poster with a sticky note. Challenge students to say the key passage, filling in the covered portion from memory. Continue adding sticky notes and saying the key passage until the class can say the entire key passage from memory or everyone has had a turn to add a sticky note.
- ◆ Does anyone remember who said these words? (*Jesus*.) Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit, and He said that the Holy Spirit would give His followers power to tell everyone in the world the good news about Him. We see this happening in the early church! When we believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit gives us power to tell others about Jesus too.

Motions (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Teach the class hand motions to help them remember the key passage. Say the verse multiple times with the motions.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How do people hear about Jesus?

A: God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Paul's Conversion and Baptism | Acts 9:1-25, 22:6-16

After Jesus died, rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven, people in Jerusalem who believed in Jesus were persecuted, or treated cruelly because of their faith. One of Jesus' followers, Stephen, was even killed. A man named Saul had been there when Stephen was killed. **Saul wanted to put an end to the church. He went into the believers' homes, dragged them out and put them into jail. Many believers fled the city.**

Saul headed to Damascus (duh MASS kuhs) **to arrest believers there. About noon, as they were near Damascus, a bright light from Heaven suddenly flashed around him.** Saul fell to the ground. **He heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"**

"Who are You, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus," He replied. "Get up and go into the city. Then, you will be told what you must do."

The men traveling with Saul saw the bright light and heard the voice but did not understand what was said. Saul got up and opened his eyes, but he couldn't see! So, the men with Saul led him by the hand into Damascus. Saul did not eat or drink for three days.

Ananias (an uh NIGH uhs), a disciple of Jesus, **lived in Damascus. The Lord spoke to Ananias in a vision. He told him to go to the house where Saul was staying.** Ananias knew that Saul had hurt many believers in Jerusalem and that he arrested anyone who believed in Jesus. But **the Lord said, "Go! I have chosen this man to take My name to Gentiles, kings and the Israelites."**

Ananias obeyed the Lord. Ananias found Saul and placed his hands on him. He said to Saul, "The Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road you were traveling, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Suddenly Saul could see again. Saul got up and was baptized.

For the next few days, Saul stayed with the believers in Damascus. He began to go to the synagogues to preach about Jesus. Saul told the people, "Jesus is the Son of God!"

The people were amazed. They recognized Saul and knew he had wanted to put an end to the church and all the believers. Now, he was one of them! The Jews did not like Saul's message, so they planned to kill him. Saul heard what the Jews wanted to do, so one night he left the city. The disciples helped Saul escape by lowering him down the city wall in a basket.

JESUS CONNECTION



Jesus appeared to Saul and changed him inside and out. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). Jesus called Saul, also known as Paul, who was once an enemy to Christians, to spend the rest of his life telling people the gospel and leading them to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

FORGIVENESS – Letting go of a grudge against someone who has wronged me.

Living LifeWise

When God forgives our sins, it changes how we live and behave.

Character Connection

Whose favorite color is blue? Red? Yellow? Those are called the primary colors, and we use them to make other colors. If I add red to blue, it becomes what color? (*Purple.*) And when we add yellow to red, it becomes different, too. It makes... orange! And when yellow and blue are mixed? (*Green.*) By adding something, the original changes to something new.

When God pours His forgiveness into our sinful hearts, it changes us into something new. Like Paul, we have new life in Jesus. The Holy Spirit helps us live His way, and so we start to sound different and look different and act different than we did before we met Jesus. How did this look in Paul's life (before and after he met Jesus on the road to Damascus)? [*Take answers.*]

We might not hurt people like Paul did. But before we know Jesus, we live our own way and do what sounds and feels good to us. But when we believe in Jesus' death and resurrection, God forgives us for our sins and helps us act and sound like He does. Now, we can be peaceful instead of angry. Maybe we stop fighting all the time. And we learn how to forgive others the way God's forgiven us.

Consider these scenarios. Which option would best demonstrate an attitude of forgiveness?

- ◆ Someone makes fun of you. Do you call them a name back or not?
- ◆ Your friend is late. Do you give him fifteen minutes and then call or start to get upset?
- ◆ A classmate keeps borrowing your pencils and losing them by accident. When he asks this time, do you give him one or not?

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ **Why was Saul going to Damascus?**
To arrest believers there, Acts 9:1–2
- ◆ **What did Saul see when Jesus stopped him on the road?**
A bright light from Heaven, Acts 9:3
- ◆ **After Jesus spoke with Saul, Saul could not do what?**
See, Acts 9:8
- ◆ **What did the Lord tell Ananias to do?**
Go to Saul, Acts 9:11
- ◆ **Why was Ananias afraid to go to Saul?**
Saul had been trying to arrest Christians, Acts 9:13–14
- ◆ **What happened when Ananias prayed for Paul?**
Scales fell from Saul's eyes and he could see again, Acts 9:18
- ◆ **What did Saul do after Ananias prayed for him?**
Got baptized, Acts 9:18

- ◆ How do we know Saul was changed?

He began preaching that Jesus is the Son of God, Acts 9:20

- ◆ How did believers help Saul escape when the Jews were planning to kill him?

They lowered him over the city wall in a basket, Acts 9:23–25

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5–10 MIN)

Profile Comparison (Older Students)

- ◆ Guide the class to open their Bibles to Acts 9. Remind them that the book of Acts was written by Luke, who also wrote the Gospel of Luke. In the book of Acts, Luke wrote about the things Jesus continued to do and teach through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit worked through Jesus' followers—the church—and the good news about Jesus spread. Prompt students to identify which Bible division the book of Acts is in. (*New Testament History*.)
- ◆ Draw a large Venn diagram on the board or a piece of paper. Read Acts 8:1–3 and Acts 9:19–22 with students, and invite them to discuss words that could describe Saul before meeting Jesus, after meeting Jesus or in both cases. Write their ideas in the different sections of the circles.
 - ◇ Before Jesus: cruel, violent, approved of killing Christians, hated Jesus, wanted to hurt Christians
 - ◇ In both cases: Loved by God, Jewish, a Roman citizen, a sinner
 - ◇ After Jesus: compassionate, loved Jesus, wanted to help Christians, dedicated to sharing the gospel
- ◆ Jesus saved Saul from his sin and chose him to spread the gospel. Saul was not just an unbeliever; he was actively trying to hurt the church and keep people from believing in Jesus. Saul wanted to arrest and even kill people who trusted Jesus and preached about Him. Despite all that, Jesus still changed his heart! Saul, also known as Paul, became one of the most effective missionaries and ended up writing many letters that became books in the New Testament. Paul's life was headed in one direction away from God, but God changed that direction and used Paul to spread the gospel.

A Hidden Cross (Older Students)

- ◆ Teach the class the following craft to give them a fun way to share the gospel with their friends. Distribute a piece of paper to each student and help the students follow the steps below. Look at the margin art for a visual aid.
 1. Lay the paper flat on a table so that it is in portrait orientation, with the long sides on the left and right.
 2. Fold the top left corner down until the short side at the top aligns with the right side of the paper.
 3. Fold the top point down so that the right side lines up with the edge that was folded down in step 1.
 4. Fold the house shape in half along the vertical centerline.
 5. Fold the flaps on both sides of the centerline back over to make an airplane-like shape.
 6. Cut a straight line up as though removing the wings and base of the airplane, leaving just the folded spine of the craft.
 7. Unfold the craft to reveal a cross.

- ◆ You can use this craft to tell people about Jesus. Explain to them that sometimes Jesus seems hidden from us, and we cannot see His plans. But when we trust in Him, and in His death and resurrection, our life unfolds to show His mark on our life.

Tic Tac Toe (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before class, choose nine questions from the Bible Review Questions and write them on large colored cards and hang on a white board or wall. Make five X and five O cards. Divide into two teams. Students from each team will choose a question to answer. Each team will attempt to get a Tic Tac Toe by answering three questions in a row. In order to put their X or O card on the board, the team must answer the question correctly.

Real Change (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Gather the following objects before class: *water and ice, popcorn and kernel, raw egg and fried egg, fresh bread and toast, oranges and juice.* Display the object pairs at the front of the room. Start with the first pair, water and ice. Ask the class to raise their hands if they can tell what the difference is between the water and the ice. Call on a student to explain. As you point out each set of objects, talk about the changes. How did each object change? How did cooking or heating or squeezing change one object into another form?
- ◆ When Jesus changed Saul, He changed Saul spiritually. Saul's sins had separated him from God, but when Saul trusted in Jesus, God forgave his sins and gave Saul eternal life. Jesus saved Saul from his sins and chose him to spread the gospel. Conversion happens when a person repents of his sin and trusts in Jesus. God forgives that person and gives him new life. Jesus changes a person's heart, and as a result, that person's life is changed too.

Blind Tag (Younger Students)

- ◆ Play two rounds of tag. In the first round, select one student to be *It* and instruct her to walk around tagging the class. The other students must keep their eyes closed. Each time a student is tagged, he becomes *It* and may open his eyes, while the student who tagged him must close her eyes and becomes part of the group trying to avoid being tagged. Play a second round where all students are allowed to keep their eyes open.
- ◆ In our story, Jesus blinded Paul when He spoke to Paul on the road to Damascus. However, it was actually this event that opened Paul's eyes to see the truth that Jesus is Lord and Savior. Jesus saved Saul from his sin and chose him to spread the gospel. Paul went from wanting to stop the church from growing to being one of the main people helping it grow. When we trust in Jesus for salvation, He can use us to grow the church too.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ Called by God (Older Students)
- ◆ Road to Damascus (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, thank You for sending Jesus to save sinners. Before we trust in Jesus, we are Your enemies like Paul was. Give us understanding and help us believe the gospel. Change our hearts to be at peace with You and trust in You. Amen.

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- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FOR REVIEW ONLY



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What are some ways Paul changed after meeting Jesus?
- What are some ways Jesus changes people today?
- Do you know anyone who treats Christians badly? How can you respond to that person?



PAUL'S CONVERSION AND BAPTISM

ACTS 9:1-25, 22:6-16

MAIN POINT: JESUS SAVED SAUL FROM HIS SINS
AND CHOSE HIM TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL.

Saul wanted to put an end to the church. He went into the believers' homes, dragged them out and put them into jail. Many believers fled the city.

Saul headed to Damascus to arrest believers there, but on the way, a bright light from Heaven suddenly flashed around him. He heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

"Who are You, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus," He replied. "Get up and go into the city. Then, you will be told what you must do."

Saul got up and opened his eyes, but he couldn't see! So, the men who were traveling with Saul led him by the hand into Damascus.

Ananias lived in Damascus. The Lord spoke to Ananias in a vision. He told him to go to the house where Saul was staying. The Lord said, "I have chosen this man to take My name to Gentiles, kings and the Israelites."

Ananias obeyed the Lord. Ananias put his hands on Saul, and suddenly Saul could see again. Saul got up and was baptized.

For the next few days, Saul stayed with the believers in Damascus. He began to go to the synagogues to preach about Jesus.

The people were amazed. They recognized Saul and knew he had wanted to put an end to the church and all the believers. Now he was one of them!

Jesus Connection: *Jesus appeared to Saul and changed him inside and out. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). Jesus called Saul, also known as Paul, who was once an enemy to Christians, to spend the rest of his life telling people the gospel and leading them to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior.*

Key Passage: *Ephesians 2:8-9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.*

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CALLED BY GOD

Color the spaces according to the numbers:

1 - BLACK 2 - YELLOW 3 - BLUE



MAICH

JNOAH

HRWEBS

DIEANL

ISIHAA

MEATTHW

GESIENS

JSHOUA

JHON

ATCS

IN A ROW

Unscramble the names of these Bible books. Once you have them all straightened out, read down the column of circles to learn the answer to this big picture question:

How do people hear about Jesus?

God uses _____ to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.



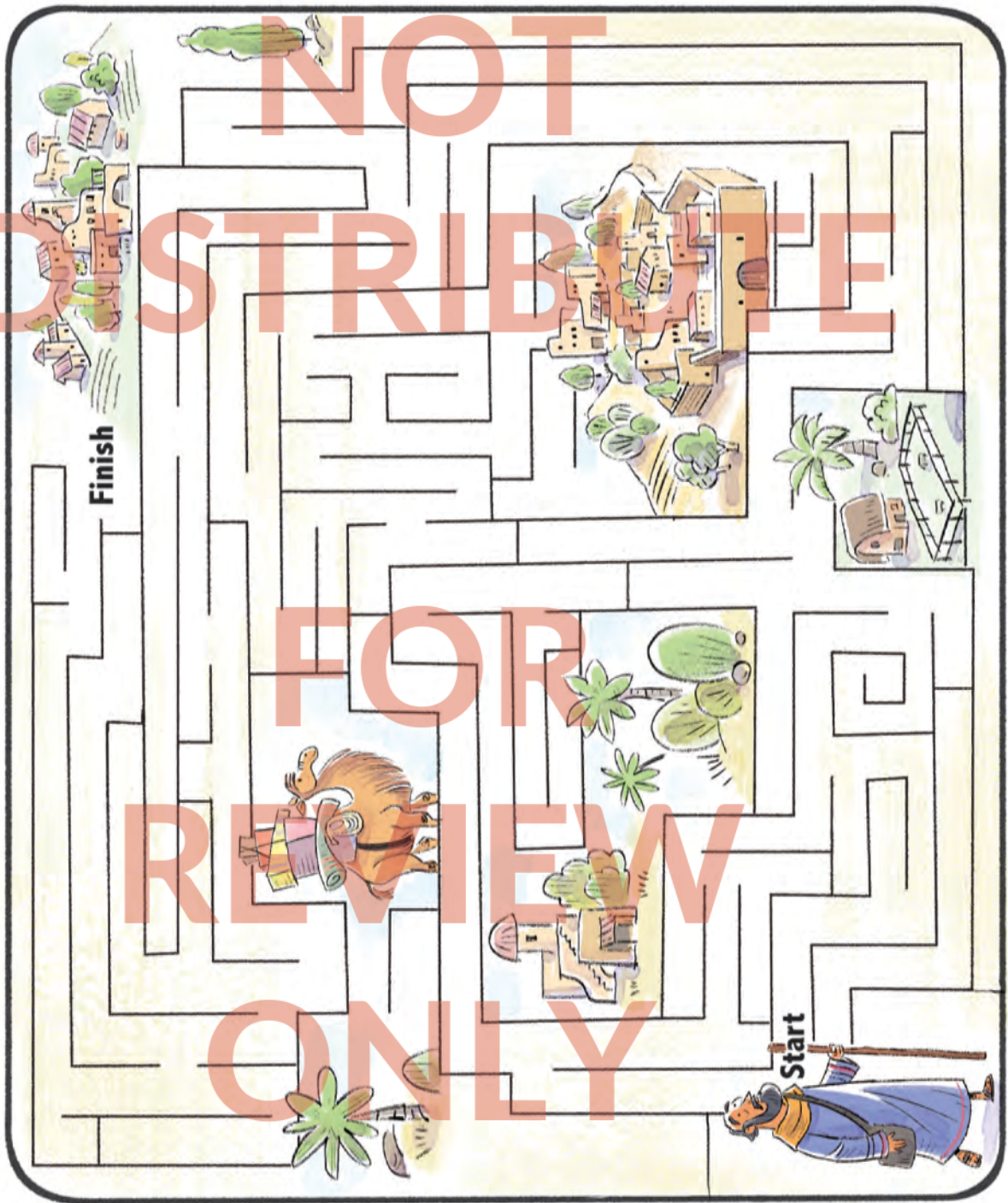
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ROAD TO DAMASCUS

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete the maze to help Saul, also known as Paul, reach Damascus.



KEY PASSAGE:

Ephesians 2:8-9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.

BIBLE STORY:

PAUL'S CONVERSION AND BAPTISM

- Saul, or Paul, hated Christians and planned to hurt them in Damascus.
- On his way there, Jesus spoke to him and blinded him.
- God told a man named Ananias to go help Paul.
- Jesus saved Paul from his sins and chose him to spread the gospel.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What are some ways Paul changed after meeting Jesus?
- What are some ways Jesus changes people today?
- Do you know anyone who treats Christians badly? How can you respond to that person?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

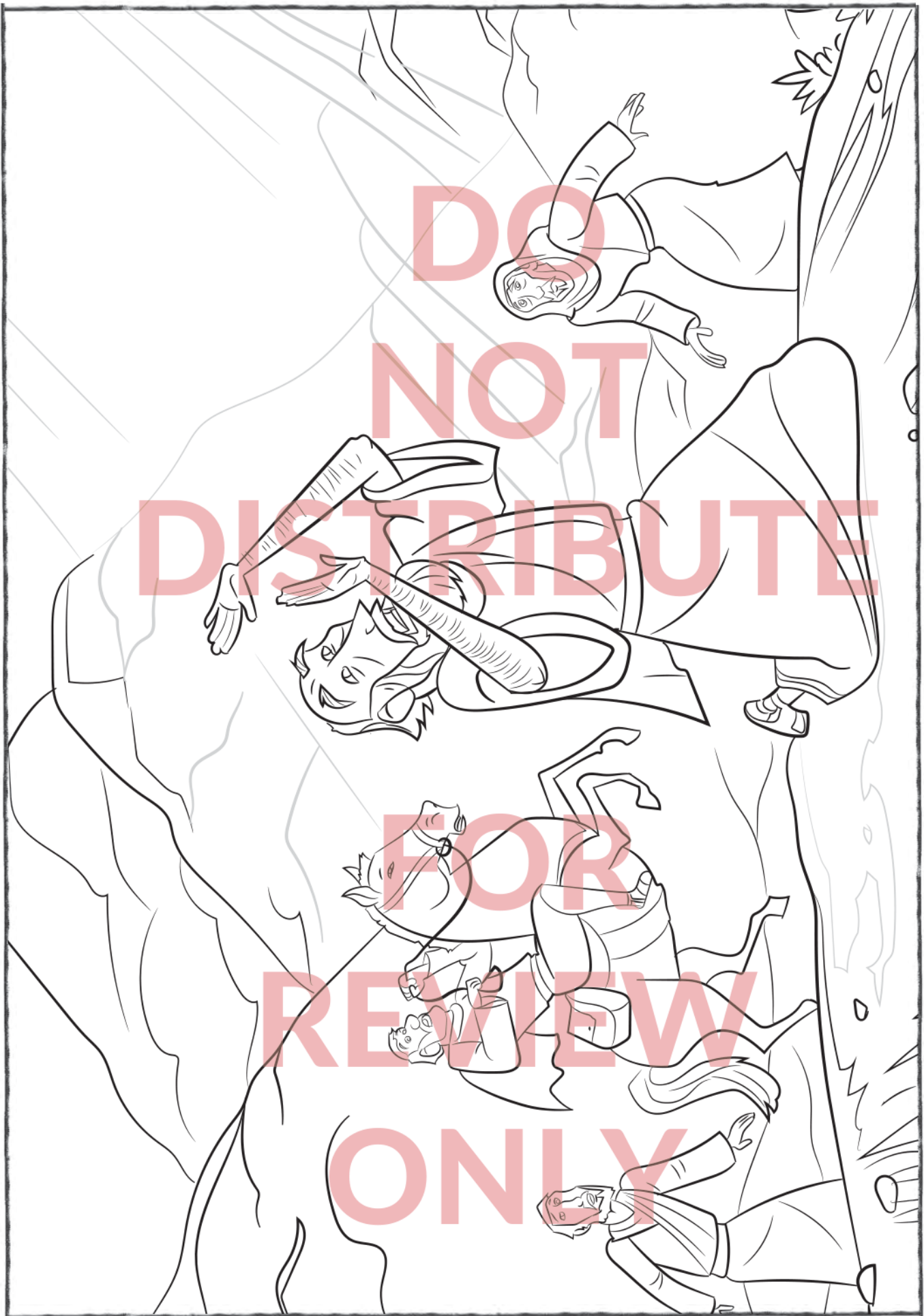
- Take a walk with your family. Talk about how Paul must have felt to see a bright light.

Paul's Conversion and Baptism

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JESUS SAVED SAUL FROM HIS SINS AND
CHOSE HIM TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL.

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POWERED BY THE GOSPEL PROJECT

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Spot the Difference

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.
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LESSON 98: WHOLEHEARTEDNESS

PAUL'S FIRST JOURNEY

Acts 13–14

PAUL'S FIRST JOURNEY



- ♦ Acts 13–14
- ♦ Big Picture Q&A: How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.
- ♦ Key Passage: Ephesians 2:8–9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

JESUS CONNECTION



Paul and Barnabas faced many people who rejected the good news about Jesus. But God had a plan for Paul to share the gospel with Gentiles, no matter what troubles Paul faced. Many believed in Jesus. The church grew and the gospel was shared so that people all over the world could be saved from their sin by trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

WHOLEHEARTEDNESS – Complete dedication in everything I do.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jesus' followers preached the gospel in Jerusalem, and the good news spread to places like Judea and Samaria. More and more people believed, and new churches began as both Jews and Gentiles began to follow Jesus.

Barnabas went to Antioch—a city about 300 miles north of Jerusalem—where he brought Paul to help teach the believers. The church in Antioch grew, and it was here that the disciples first became known as Christians (Acts 11:26).

The Holy Spirit told the believers at the church in Antioch to send out Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel. The church obeyed, and Paul and Barnabas traveled to several cities and all over the island of Cyprus, telling both Jews and Gentiles about Jesus.

Consider Paul—once a devoted persecutor of Christians—now a Christian missionary, devoted to obeying God's call to go and tell others the good news about Jesus. This was Paul's first missionary journey, and it wasn't easy. Paul and Barnabas faced rejection in every place that they traveled. Some of the people believed, but some of them were angry. Many people rejected the truth about Jesus. In some places, the Jews made plans to kill Paul.

In no place did Paul and Barnabas soften their message or abandon their mission. In Lystra, Paul healed a man, and when the witnesses to this miracle began to worship Paul and Barnabas, the two men emphatically gave credit to the one true God. When Paul's enemies attacked him and left him for dead, Paul continued on. Paul and Barnabas shared the gospel in Derbe (DUHR bih), and many people believed.

The Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to tell Jews and Gentiles about Jesus. If Paul had not taken the gospel to the Gentiles, many of us would probably not be believers today. God uses people to tell others about Jesus so that people all over the world can be saved from their sin by trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Last time, we heard the story of Paul's conversion and baptism. *Conversion* means a change to a right relationship with God. Paul was a Jew who did not think Jesus was the Messiah. In fact, his goal was to stop as many Christians as possible from talking about Jesus by putting them in jail or having them killed. How did God change Paul's mind? (*Jesus appeared and spoke with him.*) After Jesus appeared to Paul, what could Paul no longer do? (*See.*) Who did God send to pray for Paul? (*Ananias.*) After God healed Paul's eyes, Paul got baptized. Jesus saved Paul from his sins and chose him to spread the gospel. Paul began to share the good news right away. Today, we are going to find out what Paul did next.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Globe Toss (Older Students)

- ◆ Invite the class to sit together on the ground. Toss an inflatable globe to a student. She should find the country closest to her left thumb and think of a mode of transportation that starts with the same letter as the country. Example: "I paddled to Peru" or "I swam to Switzerland." Toss the globe until everyone has had a chance to catch it.
- ◆ The world is a very big place, and there are lots of people living all around the globe. Part of the Great Commission is going all over the world to share about Jesus. A missionary is a person who goes to another culture or people group and shares the good news about Jesus. Today, our story is about one of the earliest missionary journeys to share about Jesus.

Called To Go (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Instruct the class to stand at one side of the room while you go to the opposite side. Call for students who match a certain description to move forward. For example, "Everyone wearing red, take three steps forward!" or "Everyone born in March, take one hop forward." Vary your descriptions so the whole class can participate. The first student to reach your side of the room wins. If time allows, choose volunteers to call out descriptions.
- ◆ Today's Bible story is about a man whom God called to go on an important journey. Today, we'll find out where he went and what he did there.

Go On a Journey (Younger Students)

- ◆ Invite students to imagine they are going on a journey around the world together. They may go anywhere they want. You may choose to display a large world map to reference.
 - ◇ Choose one student to pick the first destination (for example, Egypt).
 - ◇ Ask another student how you will get there (for example, running). Lead the entire class to act out the mode of transportation for a few seconds before reaching the destination (e.g., students will run in place).
 - ◇ Announce that you have arrived. Ask two or three students what they would like to do in that location. Act out those activities (climb the Pyramids, lay in the sand, etc.).

- ✧ Have a different student choose a new location and repeat. Play until every student has the opportunity to provide some input into the journey.
- ✧ Whew! That was a lot of fun. Today, we are going to hear a story about a man who went on a journey to tell people about Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Ephesians 2:8–9

For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

Pass the Ball (Older and Younger Students)

- ✧ Display the key passage poster and read it aloud together. Have the class stand in a circle. Give someone a ball. That student should say the first word of the key passage and toss the ball to someone else. The second student should say the first and second words of the key passage and toss the ball again. The third player will say the first, second and third words. Continue tossing the ball and adding words until the class recites the entire passage. If a student says an incorrect word, pause and lead the whole group to say the key passage together up to that word. Then, continue from there.

Motion Charades (Older and Younger Students)

- ✧ Say the key passage using the hand motions you created for LWL 97. After saying the verse several times, play a charades-like game where you do the motions and the class recites the phrase that goes with each motion. Then, take volunteers to say the verse with the motions from memory.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How do people hear about Jesus?

A: God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Paul's First Journey | Acts 13–14

Saul, who became known by his Roman name, Paul, was with the church in Syrian Antioch (an Tee ahk). The Holy Spirit chose Paul and another believer, Barnabas, for a special work. The church leaders prayed for them and sent them out to share the good news about Jesus. So, they obeyed and left Antioch to do the work. **God led Paul and Barnabas to tell the good news about Jesus to not only the Jews, but the Gentiles—or people who were not Jews.**

Paul and Barnabas sailed to Cyprus and traveled through the whole island sharing about Jesus. The proconsul sent for them so he could also hear the word of God. Elymas (eh LOO mahs), a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet, tried to keep the proconsul from believing them. Led by the Holy Spirit, Paul looked at Elymas and said, "You are full of lies and trickery. You are the enemy of all that is right. God's hand is against you. You will become blind for a time." Immediately, Elymas was struck blind by God. When the proconsul saw this, he believed.

Paul and Barnabas left Cyprus and went on to Pisidian (pih Sih dih uhn) Antioch. They shared the good news about Jesus in the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath. Many people believed, and the whole city came to listen to them on the next Sabbath. The Jewish leaders saw this, were filled with jealousy and rejected the message. So, Paul and Barnabas told the Gentiles in Antioch about Jesus. The Gentiles accepted the good news with joy. God's Word spread throughout the entire area, but the Jewish leaders mistreated them because of their message and drove them out of Pisidian Antioch.

Next, God sent Paul and Barnabas to Iconium (igh KOH nih uhm). They shared the gospel in the Jewish synagogue. A great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. Other Jews refused to believe and turned the Gentiles against the missionaries, so Paul and Barnabas stayed in Iconium a long time. They spoke boldly about Jesus and did many miraculous signs and wonders through God's power. When they learned that the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles planned to stone them, they left Iconium to share the good news in other cities nearby.

Paul and Barnabas traveled to Lystra (LISS truh), and Paul healed a man there who was lame; the man had never been able to walk. The people saw what Paul had done, and they thought Paul and Barnabas were gods! They began to worship them, but Paul and Barnabas tore their clothes and shouted, "No! We are not gods. We are men just like you! We want to tell you the good news of God."

Then, some Jewish leaders showed up from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium and caused trouble so that the people in Lystra turned against Paul and Barnabas too. They threw stones at Paul and dragged him out of the city. They thought he was dead, but when the believers in Lystra gathered around Paul, he got up.

The next day, Paul and Barnabas went to the city of Derbe (DUHR bih). They told people there about Jesus, and many people believed. Then, they went back to Lystra and Iconium. They encouraged the believers there to continue in the faith even though they would face suffering because they believed in Jesus. Paul and Barnabas also chose leaders for the churches there.

Finally, Paul and Barnabas returned to the church at Syrian Antioch. They reported everything God had done on their journey and how God had helped them share the good news with the Gentiles.

JESUS CONNECTION



Paul and Barnabas faced many people who rejected the good news about Jesus. But God had a plan for Paul to share the gospel with Gentiles, no matter what troubles Paul faced. Many believed in Jesus. The church grew and the gospel was shared so that people all over the world could be saved from their sin by trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

WHOLEHEARTEDNESS – Complete dedication in everything I do.

Living LifeWise

Because God gave His best (Jesus) so we could be saved, we can live wholeheartedly for Him.

Character Connection

When God called Paul and Barnabas to be His missionaries, no one had done anything like that before. It was a big deal. Did they hesitate and make excuses or go? (*They went.*) Even when it got hard, they kept going. Why do you think they gave it everything they had, instead of just giving up and going home? (*God called them, He helped them, people were trusting in Jesus.*)

God has a plan in his Great Commission for us too. He wants us to live His way and talk about Him. He wants us to tell our story about how God has loved and changed us. And He wants us to be willing to obey wholeheartedly when He calls us to go or do something because, like He did for Paul and Barnabas, He will help us do everything He calls us to do.

God probably isn't calling you to travel as a missionary right now. But He does call us to other things. Which of these things sounds like something God might prompt us to do?

- ◆ Win the game at all costs.
- ◆ Offer to pray for a friend who's sad about something.
- ◆ Share your stuff or time with someone else..
- ◆ Tell someone about what you learned at church or in LifeWise Academy.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ Who chose Paul and Barnabas to go on a missionary journey?
The Holy Spirit set them apart for the work, Acts 13:2
- ◆ Where did Paul and Barnabas go first on their journey?
Cyprus, Acts 13:4
- ◆ Who tried to keep the proconsul of Cyprus from believing in Jesus?
Elymas the sorcerer, Acts 13:8
- ◆ Why did many of the Jewish leaders drive Paul out of the cities near Pisidian Antioch and Iconium?
They were jealous, Acts 13:45
- ◆ When Paul and Barnabas went to a new town, whom did they share the gospel with first?
The Jews, Acts 13:5, 14; 14:1
- ◆ What did Paul do in Lystra?
Healed a man who couldn't walk, Acts 14:8-10
- ◆ Who did the people of Lystra think Paul and Barnabas were?
The Greek gods Hermes and Zeus, Acts 14:11-12
- ◆ How did Paul and Barnabas react when the people wanted to offer sacrifices to them?
They tore their robes and told the people they were just men, not gods, Acts 14:14-15
- ◆ What did the Jews from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium do to Paul?
Encouraged the people to stone Paul, Acts 14:19
- ◆ What did Paul and Barnabas tell the disciples afterward?
It is necessary to go through hardships for God, Acts 14:22

- ◆ What three miracles did God perform in the story?

Elymas was blinded, the lame man was healed, Paul was alive after being stoned, Acts 14:10, 20-21

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Think Global (Older Students)

- ◆ Use a book about global missions or search online for information about places where people are unreached with the gospel or the church is heavily persecuted ([V.O.M. map and prayer guide](#)). Consider using a map or globe to help the class visualize where the church exists and where people are trying to stop it from growing. Then, spend some time praying with your students that God will strengthen the persecuted church and give believers boldness to preach the truth even in the face of danger. Ask God to grow His kingdom and save more people.
- ◆ The Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to tell Jews and Gentiles about Jesus, and they faced many dangers as a result of the work God called them to. All over the world, there are Christians who face incredible difficulties because of their faith. We can pray that God will give them strength and courage through hard times. God used hard times to strengthen the church in Bible times, and He still does that today.

True or False (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Challenge students to name the four Bible books that come before the Book of Acts. (*Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.*) Instruct the class to determine if the following statements are true or false. Have them point both thumbs up to answer “true” and both down for “false.”
 - ◇ Paul traveled with his friend Barnabas. (*True, Acts 13:2-3*)
 - ◇ All the Jewish people Paul and Barnabus told the good news refused to believe. (*False, Acts 13-14*)
 - ◇ People in Lystra thought that Paul and Barnabas were gods. (*True, Acts 14:11*)
 - ◇ Paul and Barnabas were happy to be worshiped. (*False; they tore their clothes and told the people to stop, Acts 14:14-15*)
 - ◇ Everyone was happy with Paul and Barnabas. (*False; people turned against them, Acts 14:19*)
 - ◇ After Lystra, Paul and Barnabas traveled to Derbe. (*True, Acts 14:20*)
 - ◇ Paul and Barnabas told believers their lives would be easy if they followed Jesus. (*False; they would face suffering, Acts 14:22*)
 - ◇ Paul and Barnabas returned to the church at Syrian Antioch. (*True, Acts 14:26*)
 - ◇ Paul and Barnabas did not tell anyone what happened on their journey. (*False; they reported everything God had done, Acts 14:27*)

Hot Potato (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Give students a ball or other small item and have them pass it to music. When the music stops, ask the student with the ball a Bible story review question. If the student cannot answer it, have them choose one person to answer the question for them. If a student gets the ball more than once, have students continue to pass the ball until someone new gets it.

Around the World Basketball (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Hang a small basketball hoop or position an empty trash can against one wall. Use masking tape or painter's tape to mark five Xs on the floor in a semi-circle around the hoop, a few feet from the basket. Label some of the spots with cities on Paul's journey: *Cyprus, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe*. Use either a small basketball or paper wads. Each student must answer a question about the story before shooting a basket. Allow the students to take turns shooting baskets from each spot on the floor. If they make the basket, they move to the next "city" and shoot from there. The first student to make it all the way back to the first city and make a shot there wins. For larger classes, more than one basketball hoop and semi-circle can be used.
- ◆ The Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to tell Jews and Gentiles about Jesus. They traveled to many different cities and faced many different trials and hardships for the sake of the gospel. They cared more about seeing God's glory spread in the world than they did for their own comfort or safety. What do you think the world would look like today if all believers put God's glory first? We can share the gospel anywhere we are. People need Jesus even in our own town! Let's pray that God gives us boldness to share with people we meet, and that one day, if He calls us, we will travel all over the world for His kingdom to grow.

Encourage or Interview Missionaries (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Identify a missionary the local church community supports or who works in or near your community. If the missionary is available to visit your class, invite him or her to share about the work of a missionary. Allow the class to ask questions or provide questions like these: What is the best thing and the hardest thing about being a missionary? What do you do to help people learn about Jesus? How can we pray for you? If a missionary is not available for an interview, show a short video clip about a missionary and/or provide stationery and invite the class to write notes to encourage them. Discuss the challenges missionaries face as they share the gospel and ways students can pray for them. Collect the cards and letters to mail together during the week.
- ◆ The Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to tell Jews and Gentiles about Jesus. God sometimes calls people to be missionaries. A *missionary* is a Christian chosen by God who obeys and goes to tell another group of people the good news about Jesus. God might one day call us to be missionaries too. No matter where we are, we can all support missionaries and live on mission to make Jesus known in our homes, our cities and far beyond.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ How Does it Grow? (Older Students)
- ◆ Go and Grow (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for Your awesome plans. Help us to live on mission for You. Give us hearts that are ready to share the gospel anywhere we go. We love You. Amen.

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FOR
REVIEW
ONLY**

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FOR REVIEW ONLY



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Whose power let Paul heal people?
- How did Paul and Barnabas react to the people who tried to worship them?
- Why did Paul and Barnabas say it was necessary for Jesus' followers to go through hardships?



PAUL'S FIRST JOURNEY

ACTS 13-14

MAIN POINT: THE HOLY SPIRIT SENT PAUL AND BARNABAS TO TELL JEWS AND GENTILES ABOUT JESUS.

Saul, who became known by his Roman name Paul, was with the church in Antioch. The Holy Spirit chose Paul and another believer, Barnabas, for a special work. God led Paul and Barnabas to tell the good news about Jesus to not only the Jews, but also the Gentiles.

Paul and Barnabas traveled to Lystra, and Paul healed a man there who was lame. The people saw what Paul had done, and they thought Paul and Barnabas were gods! They began to worship them, but Paul and Barnabas tore their clothes and shouted, "No! We are not gods. We are men just like you! We want to tell you the good news of God."

Then, some people caused trouble so that the people in Lystra turned against Paul and Barnabas. They threw stones at Paul and dragged him out of the city.

The next day, Paul and Barnabas went to the city of Derbe. They told people there about Jesus, and many people believed. Then, they went back to Lystra and to Iconium. They encouraged the believers there.

Finally, Paul and Barnabas returned to the church at Antioch. They reported everything God had done on their journey and how God had helped them share the good news with the Gentiles.

Jesus Connection: Paul and Barnabas faced many people who rejected the good news about Jesus. But God had a plan for Paul to share the gospel with Gentiles, no matter what troubles Paul faced. Many believed in Jesus. The church grew and the gospel was shared so that people all over the world could be saved from their sin by trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Key Passage: Ephesians 2:8-9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

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HOW DOES IT GROW?

Match each person, place or thing with what helps it grow.



MARK THE WAY!

Unscramble the clues to draw the route of Paul's first missionary journey.

1. PAUL AND BARNABAS LEFT ATOCHNI IN SYRIA
AND SAILED TO PRUSCY AND THEN TO ANCHOIT.
2. FROM THERE, PAUL AND BARNABAS TRAVELED THROUGH MUNICOI TO ASTRLY. PAUL HEALED A MAN THERE.
3. NEXT THEY WENT TO BEDRE, THEN PAUL AND BARNABAS WENT BACK THROUGH ASTRLY.
MUNICOI, AND ANCHOIT. THEY SAILED PAST PRUSCY TO ATOCHNI IN SYRIA.

LIFEWISE
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GO AND GROW

INSTRUCTIONS: List or draw pictures of as many things that grow as you can think of.



KEY PASSAGE:

Ephesians 2:8-9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.

BIBLE STORY:

PAUL'S FIRST JOURNEY

- The Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to tell Jews and Gentiles about Jesus.
- The people in Lystra thought they were Greek gods.
- Paul and Barnabas told the people they were just men.
- Paul and Barnabas encouraged the church.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Whose power let Paul heal people?
- How did Paul and Barnabas react to the people trying to worship them?
- Why did they say it was necessary for Jesus' followers to go through hardships?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Use mason jars and potting soil to make an indoor herb garden with your kids. Discuss how people grow spiritually.

Paul's First Journey

L 98 | WHOLEHEARTEDNESS

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LESSON 99: HUMILITY

CHRIST ALONE

Acts 15:1-35



CHRIST ALONE

- ◆ Acts 15:1-35
- ◆ Big Picture Q&A: How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.
- ◆ Key Passage: Ephesians 2:8-9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.



JESUS CONNECTION

The church leaders met in Jerusalem to answer a tough question: Can a person be saved by faith alone, or was something more needed? The early church agreed that because of Jesus' death and resurrection, He alone is all we need to be saved.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

HUMILITY – Refusing to think of myself as more important than I am.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The church in Antioch praised God for His grace to Paul on his first missionary journey. Though Paul and Barnabas were strongly opposed in some places, many people heard the gospel and believed. Paul and Barnabas took the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. But a problem arose when some Christians began saying that the new followers of Jesus—the Gentile believers—needed to obey the Law of Moses in order to be right with God.

Paul and Barnabas debated this issue with other church leaders in Jerusalem. They met together to answer a tough question: Can a person be saved by faith alone or was something more needed? When Paul addressed the council, he insisted that God saves Gentiles the same way He saves Jews: through the grace of the Lord Jesus.

Paul testified to the things God had done among the Gentiles. God had given Gentiles the Holy Spirit. James cited the prophets Amos and Isaiah in support. The group agreed that because of Jesus' death and resurrection, He alone is all we need to be saved. They also agreed that they should not make salvation more difficult for Gentiles by adding unnecessary rules.

The church chose two men—Judas and Silas—to go with Paul and Barnabas to the church at Antioch. They wrote a letter for the Gentile believers there, encouraging them and giving them instructions for how to live as followers of Christ.

The message for the Gentile believers was important: Whether Jew or Gentile, salvation comes only through faith in Christ. No one is saved by the law, but by grace alone. Emphasize to the students you teach that, while the Bible does give us plenty of instruction for how to live, sinners are made right with God only by the grace of Jesus. Salvation is a gift. To receive this gift, Jesus is all we need.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Paul obeyed the call of the Holy Spirit to go as a missionary to tell others about Jesus. With Barnabas, he traveled and shared the good news about Jesus with Jews and Gentiles. Many people believed. What miracle did God give Paul the power to do in Lystra? (*Heal a man who couldn't walk.*) Who did the people of Lystra think Paul and Barnabas were? (*Gods.*) What did Paul and Barnabas do? (*They begged the people not to worship them.*) The Jews in Lystra tried to stop Paul from preaching. What hard things did Paul and Barnabas go through? (*Some people treated them unkindly because of their message, the crowd tried to kill Paul by stoning him and they were continually forced to leave towns.*) Still, Paul and Barnabas didn't give up.

Today's Bible story is about a meeting where church leaders discussed what made someone a true Christian.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

What Does It Take? (Older Students)

- ◆ Invite the class to consider what makes a person a Christian or disciple of Jesus. How do you know someone follows Jesus? List their ideas on a large piece of paper or dry erase board. Students might talk about salvation experiences, how believers act or think and so on. Emphasize that this is a list of ideas or observations, so there are no wrong answers.
- ◆ This is an interesting list of ideas! Today, we are going to hear a Bible story about some people who had different ideas about what it means to follow Jesus. We'll find out soon what the Bible says the mark of a true believer is.

Choose a Side (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before the session, create two posters labeled *Agree* and *Disagree* and hang them on opposite sides of the room. Explain that, after you read a statement, students should go and stand by the poster that matches their response. Read several statements, pausing between them while the class moves. Make your own statements or use the following suggestions:
 - ◇ Students shouldn't have cell phones until they are 15.
 - ◇ Peanuts should not be served on airplanes.
 - ◇ Everyone should be required to learn two languages.
 - ◇ School should be in session year-round.
 - ◇ Finish with the statement: "A person can only be saved by faith in Jesus."
- ◆ In the Bible story we will hear today, a group of early church leaders met together to answer an important question. We'll find out what that was and what they decided.

The "One" Workout (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Lead the class in performing a series of different exercises, doing just one of each. For example, lead them to do one squat, one push-up, one sit-up, one jumping jack, etc.
- ◆ Doing just one of each exercise was not difficult at all. Today, we will learn about another thing that isn't difficult at all, and it only involves one thing, too!

When Adding Takes Away (Younger Students)

- ◆ Before class, gather a few different foods and condiments that would make for poor-tasting combinations. Ask the class if they want to eat any of the food, and let them taste the different snacks. [Suggestions: chocolate chip cookies and ketchup, gummy bears in mustard, cheese puffs soaked in fruit-flavored powdered drink, chocolate-covered raw onion, peppermint patties with orange slices.]
- ◆ Most of those foods could have been pretty delicious on their own, but what happened when we added to them? [Allow responses.] Most became yucky to eat. Today, we will learn about something that cannot be improved on, no matter what you might try to add to it.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Ephesians 2:8–9

For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

Weed Out (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Write each word or phrase of the key passage on a separate index card plus some extra words that are not in the verse. Give students the key passage cards. Instruct them to put the verse in order while weeding out any words or phrases that don't belong in the key passage. When they have finished, read the key passage aloud together. For a larger class, form groups and provide a set of cards for each group.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How do people hear about Jesus?

A: God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Christ Alone | Acts 15:1–35

Paul and Barnabas had been sharing the gospel with many people—including Gentiles. But some people in the church began to teach that the Gentiles could not be saved from sin unless they followed some of the same rules the Jews followed.

Paul and Barnabas disagreed, and the church leaders decided to meet in Jerusalem to talk about whether or not the Gentiles needed to obey the law of Moses. After a long discussion, Peter stood up and said to the group, “Brothers, God chose me to tell the good news to the Gentiles. They heard the good news, and they believed. God accepted them and gave them the Holy Spirit, just as He did for us.

“Why are you trying to make salvation harder for them? We know that we cannot obey God's laws perfectly. No, we believe that the Jews and Gentiles are saved in the same way—by the grace of the Lord Jesus.”

Everyone in the group was quiet as Paul and Barnabas told them about all the things God had done through them when they were with the Gentiles. Then, another apostle, James, spoke up. He pointed out that the words of the prophets showed that God wanted to save both Jews and Gentiles.

"I think we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who have trusted in Jesus. Instead, let's write them a letter telling them the things they should not do."

So, **the church leaders wrote the letter to the Gentile believers.** The leaders explained that Gentile believers should not eat food that had been given as an offering to an idol or food that still had blood in it. Believers should also be careful to keep their bodies pure.

The leaders chose Judas and Silas to go to Syrian Antioch with Paul and Barnabas to deliver the letter. The believers in Antioch were encouraged by the letter. Judas and Silas stayed with them for a while, and then they went home. Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch and taught believers and told other people the good news about Jesus.

JESUS CONNECTION



The church leaders met in Jerusalem to answer a tough question: Can a person be saved by faith alone, or was something more needed? The early church agreed that because of Jesus' death and resurrection, He alone is all we need to be saved.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

HUMILITY – Refusing to think of myself as more important than I am.

Living LifeWise

Since Jesus humbled Himself through His death on the cross, we can support others instead of focusing on ourselves.

Character Connection

Sometimes we make life harder for someone else by adding to their load—physically, emotionally or mentally. We make sure our sibling gets assigned more of the chores to do. We let someone else in the group project do all the work. Or we tease or criticize another person for not looking, acting, dressing or talking like us. All of this is adding to another's load. Many times, we don't mean to do it. Other times, we do. But almost every time, it's because we want to make our lives easier or make ourselves look or feel better, instead of helping the other person.

God, however, doesn't work like that. Jesus took the punishment for our sin on Himself. And when the early church discussed whether or not to ask new believers to also follow a bunch of rules, they decided that was not God's way or God's desire. They did not want to make it harder for the new believers. Jesus humbled Himself to help us, and His Spirit enables us to humble ourselves to help and encourage others too.

Do you think these examples demonstrate humility? Why or why not?

- ◆ Your teacher has had to remind the class all day not to talk while she's talking.

- ◆ The neighbor's trash can blew over in the rain, but you fix it so he doesn't get wet.
- ◆ Your youth group or club is helping clean up trash in the park today, but it's warm and sunny, so you go play ball with a friend instead.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ Some people in the church began to teach the Gentiles that they had to follow the law of Moses in order to do what?
Be saved from sin, Acts 15:1
- ◆ In what city did Paul and Barnabas meet with church leaders?
Jerusalem, Acts 15:2
- ◆ Peter said God gave whom to both Jews and Gentiles?
The Holy Spirit, Acts 15:8
- ◆ How are Jews and Gentiles saved?
Faith in Jesus, Acts 15:11
- ◆ What rules did the church leaders ask the Gentile Christians to follow?
Don't eat meat offered to idols or with blood in it; keep your body pure, Acts 15:29
- ◆ Who went to Antioch to share the letter from the leaders?
Judas, Silas, Paul and Barnabas, Acts 15:22
- ◆ How did the church at Antioch respond to the letter from the church leaders in Jerusalem?
They were filled with joy, Acts 15:31-32
- ◆ What did Judas and Silas do after delivering the letter to the church in Syrian Antioch?
Stayed with the believers for a while, Acts 15:31-32

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Something Added (Older Students)

- ◆ Read the recipe below for chocolate chip cookies. Do not read the additions in brackets. Challenge the class to listen closely. Then, provide paper and pencils. Read the recipe again, including the additions in brackets. Challenge the students to make a note any time they hear ingredients or instructions you added to the original recipe.
 - ◇ Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.
 - ◇ Combine 2¼ cups flour, 1 teaspoon baking soda, [1 cup oatmeal] and 1 teaspoon salt in a small bowl.
 - ◇ Beat 1 cup butter, ¾ cup sugar, ¾ cup brown sugar, and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract in a large mixer bowl until creamy.
 - ◇ Add 2 [dozen] large eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Gradually beat in the flour mixture.
 - ◇ Stir in 2 cups chocolate chips [and 1 cup of raisins].
 - ◇ Drop by rounded tablespoons onto ungreased baking sheets.
 - ◇ Bake for 9 to 11 minutes or until golden brown.

- ◆ Were you able to pick out what I added to the recipe? Those things were not necessary to make chocolate chip cookies. In our story, the church leaders met to answer a tough question: Can a person be saved by faith alone or was something more needed? Some Christians had been saying that the new followers of Jesus—the Gentile believers—needed to obey the Law of Moses to be right with God. The early church agreed that because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, He alone is all we need to be saved.

Bible Trivia (Older and Younger Student)

- ◆ Ask students which Bible division comes before the book of Acts. (*Gospels*.) Which Bible division is the book of Acts in? (*New Testament History*.) Form two teams. Ask the Bible review questions, allowing time for students to discuss with their teammates. If a team gets the correct answer, have them throw a die (or dice) to see how many points they get for their answer. After any incorrect answers, give the opposing team a chance to answer for the points.

Jesus Plus Nothing (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before the session, write the name *Jesus* on one inflatable ball and the word *law* on several more inflatable balls. Instruct the class to stand around a bedsheet and hold on to the edges, lifting the sheet to waist height. Place the *Jesus* ball and a few *law* balls on the sheet. Challenge the class to shake and lift the sheet to knock off the *law* balls but keep the *Jesus* ball on the sheet. As students play, add more *law* balls. If the *Jesus* ball falls off, reset and play again.
- ◆ The church in Jerusalem encouraged Gentile believers that Jesus alone was all they needed to be saved. We are guilty under the law, but Jesus obeyed the law perfectly. In Him, we are forgiven.

One More Thing (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Instruct the class to sit in a circle, around a table if possible. Give a sheet of paper to one student and give her up to 30 seconds to draw one thing on the paper. Then, she will pass the paper to her left. That student will have 30 seconds to add one thing to the picture before passing it. Continue until each student has had a chance to add one thing to the picture. Then, display the picture for the class to see and discuss.
- ◆ This activity was a fun way to see the effects of letting people add whatever they want to a picture. In the early church, some Jewish believers wanted to add to the gospel all the Old Testament laws about what to eat, what to do and how to live. They thought that believing in Jesus wasn’t enough to be saved from sin, but that people must also obey the entire law. The Holy Spirit reminded them that Jesus was enough. His perfect life, sacrificial death and victorious resurrection made the way for all people to be saved. The law still contained good wisdom for honoring God, but it was not able to save people from sin. Only Jesus can save people.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ Picture Mix-Up (Older Students)
- ◆ What Saves Us? (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Father, thank You that faith in Jesus is all we need to be saved. Give us extra grace to obey You each day. Help us remember that our obedience comes from love for You and knowing that we are saved by grace through faith. Amen.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FOR REVIEW ONLY



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What was the purpose of the Old Testament Law?
- Why can't the law save us?
- Why is faith in Jesus enough to receive salvation?



CHRIST ALONE

ACTS 15:1-35

MAIN POINT: THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM ENCOURAGED GENTILE BELIEVERS.

Paul and Barnabas had been sharing the gospel with many people—including Gentiles. But some people in the church began to teach that the Gentiles could not be saved unless they followed some of the same rules the Jews followed.

The church leaders decided to meet in Jerusalem to talk about whether or not the Gentiles needed to obey the law of Moses. Peter stood up and said to the group, "They heard the good news, and they believed. God accepted them and gave them the Holy Spirit, just as He did for us."

"We know that we cannot obey God's laws perfectly. Jews and Gentiles are saved in the same way—by the grace of the Lord Jesus."

Everyone in the group was quiet as Paul and Barnabas told them about all the things God had done through them when they were with the Gentiles. Then, James pointed out that the words of the prophets showed that God wanted to save both Jews and Gentiles.

The church leaders wrote a letter to the Gentile believers. The leaders chose Judas and Silas to go to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas to deliver the letter. The believers in Antioch were encouraged by the letter.

Jesus Connection: *The church leaders met in Jerusalem to answer a tough question: Can a person be saved by faith alone or was something more needed? The early church agreed that because of Jesus' death and resurrection, He alone is all we need to be saved.*

Key Passage: *Ephesians 2:8-9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.*

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PICTURE MIX-UP

Arrange the picture pieces in the correct order to complete the Bible story main point.



The church in Jerusalem encouraged _____ believers.

THE MESSAGE

Circle the letter to indicate if the statement is true or false. Then, use the circled letters to fill in the message.

T	F
C	A
H	D
E	R
N	I
S	B
T	L

Some Jews believed Gentiles needed to follow Jewish rules to be saved.

Peter said that God accepted Gentiles who believed.

The Jews were trying to make salvation easier for Gentiles.

People can obey God's laws perfectly if they try hard.

The words of the prophets showed God wants to save both Jews and Gentiles.

Jews and Gentiles are saved in the same way—by the grace of the Lord Jesus.

The early church agreed that because of Jesus' death and resurrection, people are saved by _____ alone.

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WHO SAVES US?

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the picture or pictures that represent ways we can be saved from sin.



KEY PASSAGE:

Ephesians 2:8-9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How do people hear about Jesus?
- God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.

BIBLE STORY:

CHRIST ALONE

- Some men wanted Gentile believers to obey all of the Old Testament Law.
- Peter said we are saved only by faith in Jesus.
- The leaders of the church sent a letter to the Gentiles.
- The church in Jerusalem encouraged Gentile believers.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What was the purpose of the Old Testament Law?
- Why can't the law save us?
- Why is faith in Jesus enough?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

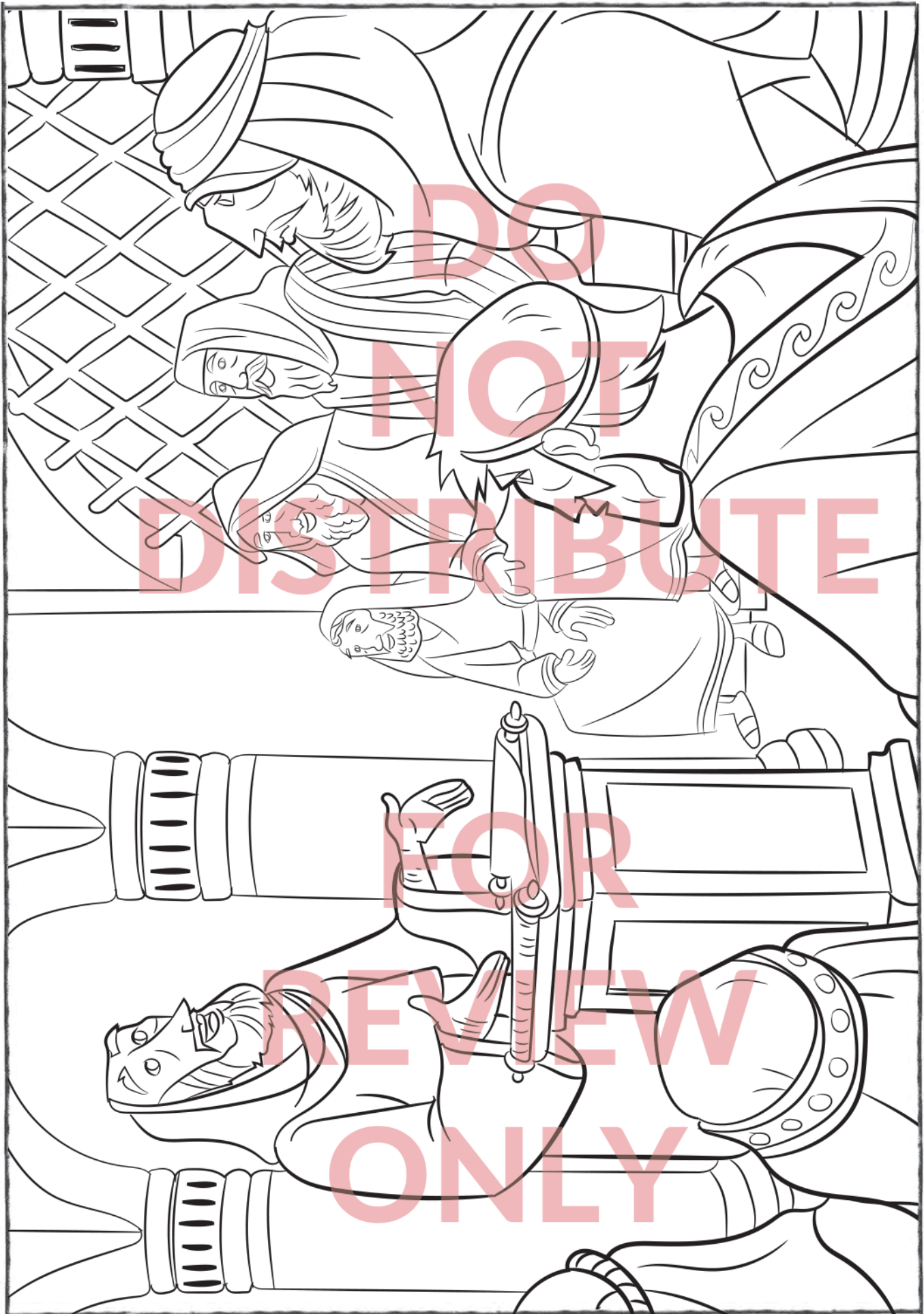
- As a family, write encouraging notes to people in your church. Deliver them the next time your church gathers.
- Print a picture of a famous painting. Let your kids add to it. Ask what would happen if they painted on it in real life.

Christ Alone

L 99 | HUMILITY

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LESSON 100: COMMITMENT

PAUL'S SECOND JOURNEY

Acts 16:1-34

PAUL'S SECOND JOURNEY



- ♦ Acts 16:1-34
- ♦ Big Picture Q&A: How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.
- ♦ Key Passage: Ephesians 2:8-9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

JESUS CONNECTION



Lydia, the jailer and many others were saved because they heard the gospel and believed in Jesus. Paul and Silas preached the same message to all people, no matter who they were: "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."



LIFEWISE QUALITY

COMMITMENT – Doing what I say I'll do.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Paul was back at the church of Antioch in Syria. The church had sent out Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel to Jews and Gentiles in places like Lystra and Derbe. Then, they returned to the church of Antioch. Some time passed, and Paul wanted to return to some of the cities he visited on his first journey to see how the new believers were doing.

John Mark started out with Paul and Barnabas, as their assistant, on the first missionary journey. After they left Cyprus and were on the way to Pisidian Antioch, John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark on a second missionary journey, but Paul objected because John had deserted them on their first journey. Paul and Barnabas could not come to an agreement. Finally, Barnabas took John Mark and went back to Cyprus and Paul chose Silas to accompany him on his second missionary journey.

Paul and Silas traveled through Syria and Cilicia (suh LISH ih uh), encouraging believers and strengthening churches. The number of believers in the churches increased daily.

The Lord called Paul and Silas to go to Macedonia, so they obeyed. Two major events happened while Paul was in Macedonia. First, a woman named Lydia became a believer. Paul and Silas had gone to the river to pray. They spoke to the women at the river. God opened Lydia's heart to the good news of the gospel.

Then, a jailer became a believer. This happened when Paul and Silas were thrown into prison after Paul commanded a fortune-telling spirit to come out of a slave girl. Late at night, an earthquake rocked the prison. The prisoners could have escaped, but they stayed where they were.

This was a huge relief to the jailer. Had the prisoners escaped, the jailer would have been punished. In fact, the jailer was ready to kill himself when Paul shouted, “We are all here!” The jailer asked Paul and Silas how to be saved from sin. They told him, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.” The man believed and was baptized.

Lydia, the jailer and many others were saved because they heard the gospel and believed in Jesus. Paul and Silas preached the same message to all people, no matter who they were: “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.”

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

On Paul’s first missionary journey, the Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to tell Jews and Gentiles about Jesus. They went from Syrian Antioch to places like Cyprus, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. Does anyone remember some of the things that happened to Paul on his journey? (*Many people believed in Jesus, God did miracles through Paul and Barnabas, unbelievers persecuted them.*) Afterwards, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch and reported all that had happened. Because some Gentiles had believed in Jesus, the church leaders began to discuss what made someone a true believer in Jesus. What did the leaders decide all people were saved by? (*Faith in Jesus.*) All Christians are saved by the grace of Jesus, through faith in His death on the cross for their sins and His resurrection from the dead. That is the good news! Paul shared the same good news about Jesus on his next missionary journey. Today, we’ll find out what happened when Paul shared the gospel in an area called Macedonia.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Shake Them Out (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Form five groups. Give each group a tissue box with five table tennis balls inside. Each group of students should take turns shaking the tissue box, without turning it upside down, to cause all the table tennis balls to pop out. You may choose to let each group use a stopwatch to see who can shake out the table tennis balls the fastest.
- ◆ That was a fun—and shaky—game. Today, we will hear a story about a time God let two men out of jail by shaking the earth! Sounds pretty incredible, doesn’t it? We’ll learn more soon!

Find a Place (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Instruct the class to find a place somewhere in the room, at least one arm’s length from any other player’s place. This is their “first place.” Emphasize that students should remember this location. Repeat this process until students have selected four or five different places in the room, encouraging them to remember each spot. Then, guide the class to return to their first place. On your signal, students should move from their first place to their second place, then to their third place and so on. Consider letting them move between locations in different ways: jumping, walking, skipping, tiptoeing backward, etc. End the game with the class back in their first place.
- ◆ Today, we are going to hear more about one of Paul’s missionary journeys. Paul traveled from place to place, telling everyone the good news about Jesus. After he traveled, he often returned to his first place: the church at Antioch in Syria.

Disaster-Preparedness Drills (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Take some time to research what to do in case of an earthquake (or other natural disaster that may be more common where you live). Guide your class through a drill and discuss why each step is necessary to help them stay safe in a dangerous situation.
- ♦ Something like an earthquake is almost always seen as a dangerous event. We take special steps to make sure we stay safe if a natural disaster occurs. In today's story, we will hear about a time an earthquake was part of God's plan to save people instead.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Ephesians 2:8–9

For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

Mystery Line-Up (Older Students)

- ♦ Write each word or phrase of the key passage on a separate index card. Use tape to attach each card to a student's back. Instruct the class to work together to get in order without anyone looking at the word or phrase taped to his own back. Once they are in order, invite each student to say her word or phrase in order.

Eraser Challenge (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Display the key passage poster and read it aloud together. Write the words of the key passage on a chalkboard or dry erase board. Erase one or two words and challenge the class to say the key passage. Continue erasing a few words at a time throughout the passage until the class can recite the key passage from memory.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How do people hear about Jesus?

A: God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Paul's Second Journey | Acts 16:1–34

Paul and Silas went back to the places Paul had visited on his first missionary journey. They taught the churches about Jesus. They also shared the decisions of the leaders in Jerusalem about Gentile believers. **The churches grew stronger in their faith and even more people believed.**

Paul and his friends traveled throughout Galatia. When Paul reached Lystra, he met a young believer named Timothy. The church there spoke well of him, and Paul decided to take Timothy with him on the rest of his journey. **They continued to go throughout Galatia and Phrygia encouraging the churches.**

Next, **they tried to travel to Asia and Bithynia but the Holy Spirit kept them from going there.** They went on to Troas where Paul saw a vision one night. **In the vision, God told Paul to go to Macedonia** (MASS uh DOH nih uh). God wanted Paul to share the gospel there.

So, Paul and his friends went to Macedonia. They stopped for a few days in a city called Philippi (FIH lih pigh). On the Sabbath, Paul and his friends went outside the city to the river to pray. Some women were there, and Paul started talking to them. A woman named Lydia was listening, and God opened her heart to accept what Paul was saying. Lydia and everyone in her house believed and were baptized.

On another day, Paul and Silas were on their way to pray, and a servant girl met them. She had an evil spirit in her that allowed her to predict the future. She earned a lot of money for her masters by telling the future.

The girl followed Paul and Silas, shouting, “These men, who are telling you how to be saved, are servants of the Most High God!” She followed them for many days. Finally, Paul turned and said to the evil spirit in her, “By the power of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!” And the evil spirit came out right away.

Now, the girl’s owners were upset because she could no longer tell the future. They grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them to the authorities. They complained about the things Paul and Silas were doing. The officials ordered Paul and Silas to be beaten and thrown into jail.

About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing songs to God. The other prisoners were listening to them. All of a sudden, a violent earthquake shook the jail. All the doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose! The jailer woke up and saw the prison doors open. He thought the prisoners had escaped. He knew he would be punished for their escape, so he took out his sword and was about to kill himself.

“Don’t hurt yourself!” Paul said. “We are all here!”

The jailer rushed inside and fell down in front of Paul and Silas, shaking with fear. Then, he took Paul and Silas outside. “Men, what must I do to be saved?” he asked.

They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.” Paul and Silas told the message of Jesus to the jailer and to everyone in his household. All of them believed and were baptized right away. The jailer washed Paul’s and Silas’ wounds. He brought them into his house and fed them. Later that day, Paul and Silas were set free.

JESUS CONNECTION



Lydia, the jailer, and many others were saved because they heard the gospel and believed in Jesus. Paul and Silas preached the same message to all people, no matter who they were: “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.”

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

COMMITMENT – Doing what I say I’ll do.

Living LifeWise

Jesus has promised us peace in every situation, so we can keep our commitments.

Character Connection

Peace is something the whole world is looking for, but true peace is found only in Jesus. When we accept His sacrifice for our sins, He gives us peace with God. That's the most important kind of peace to have. But in our everyday lives, no matter what we face, Jesus promised that He would give peace to His followers (John 14:27). Even when the world is crazy or uncertain or seems to be going "all wrong," God is with us to give us peace.

Paul found that peace when God changed Paul's plans and sent him to a new place. He had that peace when the young girl was following them around. He even knew God's peace in a jail cell where he was thrown for doing something good. Because Paul had peace that only God gives, he was able to keep doing what he said he would—telling people about Jesus and bringing glory to God—in every situation.

Paul didn't worry about all the strange or even hurtful experiences. He let God's peace fill him so he could keep his commitment. God will help us live the same way. Having God's peace in our hearts will help us keep our commitments whether we face good things or hard things.

For each situation, choose two volunteers, one to act out a peace-filled response and one to act out an unpeaceful one.

- ◆ You find out you have to move and change schools again.
- ◆ You told the best basketball player in the school you would play a one-on-one game with him after school and he invited the principal and teachers to watch.
- ◆ You are excited to go to a friend's party, but two days before the event, you break your arm and have to get a cast.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ **Why did Paul return to the places he went on his first missionary journey?**
To teach the churches more about Jesus, strengthen them and share the rules for new Gentile believers, Acts 16:1–5
- ◆ **What did Paul see in a vision?**
A man from Macedonia, Acts 16:9
- ◆ **What was the name of the woman at the river?**
Lydia, Acts 16:14
- ◆ **What did Lydia and her household decide to do after hearing the gospel?**
They believed and were baptized, Acts 16:15
- ◆ **What did the servant girl say about Paul and Silas?**
"These men are servants of the Most High God!" Acts 16:17
- ◆ **What were Paul and Silas doing while in prison?**
Praying and singing to God, Acts 16:25
- ◆ **What caused the prison doors to open and the prisoners' chains to come loose?**
An earthquake, Acts 16:26
- ◆ **What did Paul and Silas say the jailer needed to do to be saved from sin?**
Believe in the Lord Jesus, Acts 16:31

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Wristband Reminders (Older Students)

- ◆ Give each student a large, wide rubber band. Demonstrate how to stretch the rubber band around a book. Display the main point poster and instruct the class to use fine-point permanent markers to write on the rubber bands the message Paul and Silas shared with the jailer: *Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved*. If time and resources allow, suggest students make extra rubber band messages to give to others.
- ◆ Paul and Silas told the jailer, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.” You can wear these rubber band messages on your wrist as a reminder of how God saves sinners. Lydia, the jailer and many others were saved because they heard the gospel and believed in Jesus. Now you can share this message with your friends, family members or neighbors.

Alone or Together? (Older Students)

- ◆ Give each student a piece of paper and a pencil or marker. Instruct them to fold their paper in half, then unfold it and draw a line down the center of their paper along the fold line. Read a list of activities and ask the class to sort them based on whether or not they can do the activity alone. After a few activities, ask them to come up with their own activities they can and cannot do alone. Some activities may fit well into either category.
- ◆ Suggested activities: Read, eat lunch, play a board game, ride a bike, do homework, swing on a swing set, use a seesaw, sing praises to God, share the gospel.
- ◆ Many activities can be done alone. Others, we cannot do without a friend or partner to help us. Paul and Silas told the jailer, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.” We need Jesus to be saved. We cannot be saved without help, and no one besides Jesus can save us.

Sorry (Older and Younger Student)

- ◆ Before class, write questions from the Bible story review on large colored cards. On the back of most of the cards, write a point value. On the back of two or three cards, write the word *Sorry*. Place them on the board or wall. Create teams. Each team will take turns choosing the color or question they wish to answer. If the team gets the correct answer, they win the points on the back of the card. If the word *Sorry* is written on the back of the card, the opposite team loses all their points.

Act It Out (Younger Students)

- ◆ Before class, gather any props needed. Act out the story using the bold words from the Bible story script. Assign the students parts; have them listen as you read the story and act out their part. If time allows, change roles and act out the story again.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ Earthquake (Older Students)
 - ◇ Answers: 1. Antioch; 2. Derbe, Lystra, Iconium; 3. Antioch, Troas; 4. Philippi.
- ◆ Paul’s Path (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, we praise You for sending your Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins. Thank You for welcoming us to be a part of Your church and for giving believers the honor of sharing the good news about Jesus with the whole world. Help each of us to trust in Jesus alone to be saved from sin. Show us how to be faithful when we go through difficult things because of our faith in Jesus.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What did Paul and Silas do in jail?
- When is it easy to praise God? When is it difficult?
- What kinds of people can be saved by the gospel?



PAUL'S SECOND JOURNEY

ACTS 16:1-34

MAIN POINT: PAUL AND SILAS TOLD THE JAILER, "BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS AND YOU WILL BE SAVED."

God told Paul to go to Macedonia to share the gospel. So, Paul and his friends went to Macedonia. They stopped for a few days in a city called Philippi. On the Sabbath, Paul and his friends went to the river to pray. Some women were there, and Paul started talking to them. A woman named Lydia was listening, and God opened her heart to accept what Paul was saying. Lydia and everyone in her house were baptized.

On another day, Paul and Silas were on their way to pray, and a servant girl met them. She had a spirit in her that allowed her to predict the future. The girl followed Paul and Silas, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God!"

Paul said to the spirit in her, "By the power of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!" And the spirit came out right away.

Now, the girl's owners were upset because she could no longer tell the future. They grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them to the authorities. The officials ordered for Paul and Silas to be beaten and thrown into jail.

About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing songs to God. All of a sudden, a violent earthquake shook the jail. All the doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose! The jailer woke up and saw the prison doors open. Paul said, "We are all here!"

The jailer rushed took Paul and Silas outside. "Men, what must I do to be saved?" he asked.

They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved." Paul and Silas told the message of Jesus to the jailer and to everyone in his household. All of them believed and were baptized right away.

Jesus Connection: Lydia, the jailer and many others were saved because they heard the gospel and believed in Jesus. Paul and Silas preached the same message to all people, no matter who they were: "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."

Key Passage: Ephesians 2:8-9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

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EARTHQUAKE!

Number the broken stones to reorder the Bible story main point.



TOLD

SAVED.

PAUL
AND
SILAS

AND

THE LORD
JESUS CHRIST

THE JAILER.

"BELIEVE
IN

MARK THE WAY II

Unscramble the clues to draw the route of Paul's second missionary journey.

1 PAUL BEGAN IN THE CITY OF _____ IN SYRIA.
ACHNOIT

GOD TOLD HIM TO GO TO MACEDONIA.

2 PAUL VISITED THE CITIES OF _____
BERED

_____, AND _____
STRALY MUINOICI

3 PAUL TRAVELED THROUGH _____ AND _____
SAROT ACHNOIT

4. FINALLY, HE ARRIVED IN _____
HIIILPPP



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PAUL'S PATH

INSTRUCTIONS: Use a Bible map to find and draw the route Paul took on his journey.



KEY PASSAGE:

Ephesians 2:8-9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How do people hear about Jesus?
- God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.

BIBLE STORY:

PAUL'S SECOND JOURNEY

- Paul and Silas were arrested while sharing the gospel.
- God rescued them from jail with an earthquake.
- The jailer was afraid the prisoners had escaped.
- Paul and Silas told the jailer, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What did Paul and Silas do in jail?
- When is it easy to praise God? When is it difficult?
- What kinds of people can be saved by the gospel?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

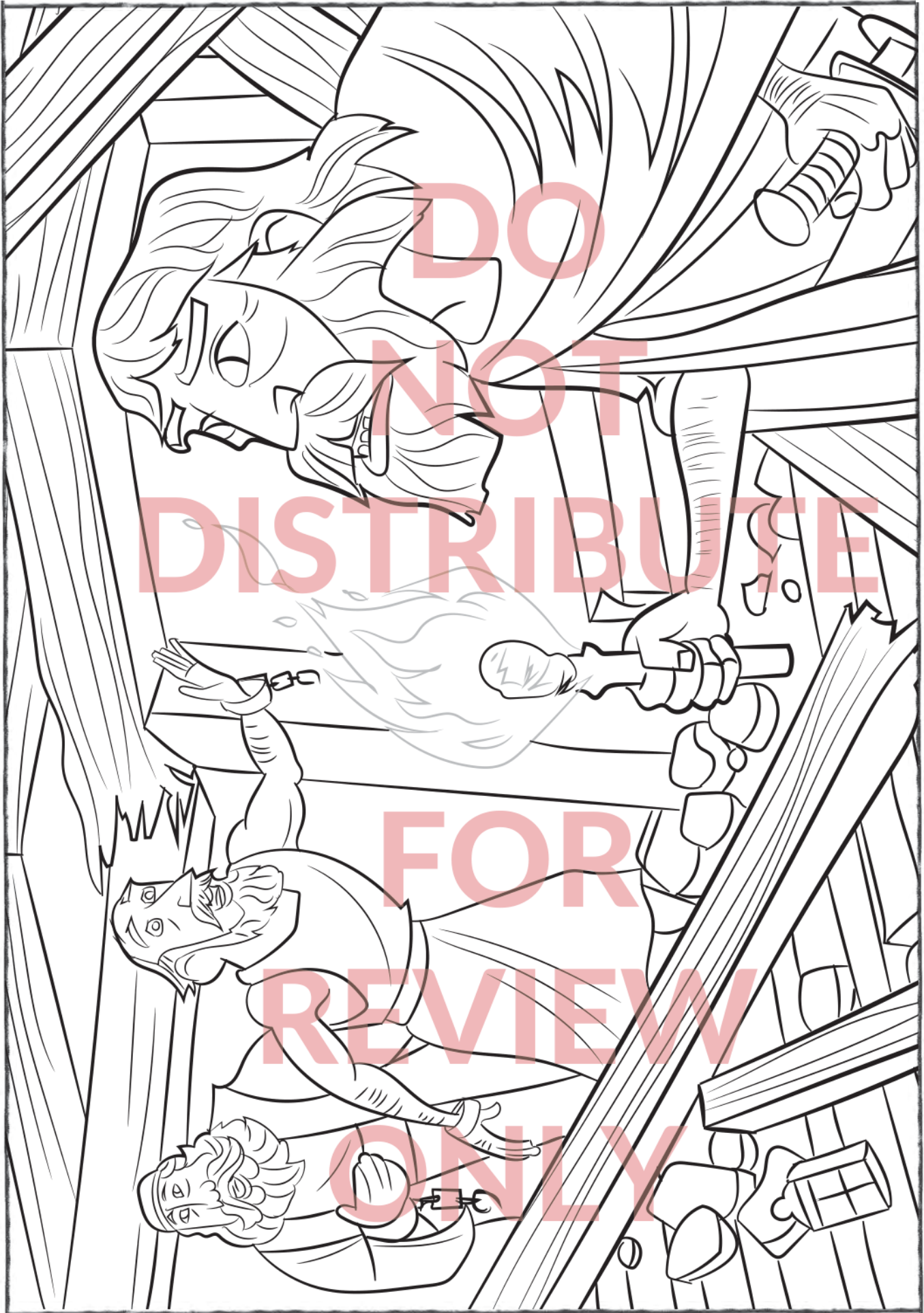
- Work with your family to prepare a response plan in case of a natural disaster. Talk to your kids about how Paul and Silas might have felt before and after the earthquake.

Paul's Second Journey

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PAUL AND SILAS TOLD THE JAILER, "BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS AND YOU WILL BE SAVED."

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LESSON 101: WISDOM

PAUL PREACHED IN EUROPE

Acts 17:1–18:22

PAUL PREACHED IN EUROPE



- ◆ Acts 17:1–18:22
- ◆ Big Picture Q&A: How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.
- ◆ Key Passage: Ephesians 2:8–9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

JESUS CONNECTION



The men of Athens worshiped a false god whom they did not know. Paul explained God's plan of salvation to them. He said that God is not like the Greek idols. Only God deserves our worship! Paul talked about Jesus and the resurrection. All people can know God because Jesus took the punishment for sin that separates people from God.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

WISDOM – Knowledge and skill for doing life God's way.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Paul and Silas had been released from prison in Philippi (FIH lih pigh). Before leaving the city, they met with believers at Lydia's house and encouraged them. Then, they traveled to Thessalonica and stopped at the synagogue to explain to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. A large number of Greeks and influential women believed in Jesus.

Before long, Jews in the city became jealous and forced Paul and Silas out of the city. Even though the Jews opposed Paul's preaching, the number of believers in Thessalonica grew and the church there was established.

Paul made his way through Berea, where people heard the gospel and believed. The Jews from Thessalonica followed him and caused trouble, so Paul went to Athens. Athens—about 200 miles from Berea—was a cultural center. People in Athens loved to hear about and study the latest ideas. The Jews and the philosophers in the city were interested in what Paul had to say, but Paul was troubled by what he saw. Athens was full of idols to every kind of god. There was even an altar to an unknown god.

The people obviously had a religious desire. Paul knew that their hunger for God could be satisfied—in Jesus. Paul began preaching, telling the people that they worshiped a god they did not know. He said that people can know God! God made the world and everything in it! "We ought not to think that God is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man," Paul said.

Then, Paul told them about Jesus and how God wanted them to turn away from their sins. Some people made fun of Paul, but others believed. Paul explained God's plan of salvation. God is not like the Greek idols. Only God deserves our worship! Because Jesus took the punishment for our sin, we can know God.

Paul left Athens and traveled on to Corinth, a city known for great wickedness and idolatry. Although many of the Jews rejected the gospel, God encouraged Paul to stay in Athens and continue to teach the Corinthian people the Word of God. To make a living, Paul was a tentmaker. Paul became friends with two other tentmakers in Corinth: a man named Aquila and his wife, Priscilla. In his business dealings, Paul was able to share the gospel with many people. Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half and the church in Corinth grew.

Paul took Aquila and Priscilla with him to Ephesus. Ephesus was a thriving city in the Roman Empire. After sharing the gospel with the Jews in Ephesus for a short time, Paul journeyed back to his home church in Syrian Antioch while Aquila and Priscilla remained in Ephesus.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

We have been learning about some of the places Paul traveled on his second missionary journey. Who went with Paul? (*Silas*.) Who believed Paul's message in Philippi? (*Lydia*.) What happened to Paul and Silas after they healed the slave girl? (*They were put in jail*.) What did Paul and Silas do after an earthquake opened their prison cells? (*They told the jailer about Jesus*.) The jailer and his family chose to trust in Jesus to save them from sin. Today, we will learn where Paul went next on his journey.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Known or Unknown (Older Students)

- ◆ Print one copy of the "Trait Bingo Cards" for each student. Distribute pencils. Instruct students to find a classmate who matches the trait described and ask them to initial that square on the bingo card. Play multiple rounds as time allows, trying to get five in a row, all the outer squares, the four corners or a "blackout."
- ◆ Some of the traits were things you know about your friends, but some were things you did not know. Today, we will hear a story about people living in Athens. They did not know God, but Paul helped them by telling them about Him.

Statue Tag (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Clear any obstacles from and designate boundaries for the playing area. Choose one player to be *It* and provide a pretend "flashlight" (cone, marker, etc.). The rest of the class should spread out. Explain that *It* is the investigator, and the players are statues. The statues should not let the investigator catch them moving. The investigator will move slowly around the room, pointing his "flashlight" at the statues. If that player moves when *It* points at him, the player must name a book of the Bible before returning to the game. Encourage the students who are statues to be sneaky when moving around so they don't get caught.
- ◆ That was fun! We know that statues don't move or touch each other or make noise. They don't have the power to do anything at all! In today's Bible story, we are going to hear about some people who worshiped statues, or idols, that they made out of gold, silver or wood. Paul told these people about Jesus.

Create with Dough (Younger Students)

- ◆ Invite the class to create something with modeling clay or play dough. As they work, invite them to talk about what they are creating. Point out that as they shape the clay, they are the creator and the dough figure is the creation. Ask the following questions:
 - ◇ Are the figures you created alive? (No.)
 - ◇ Do the figures you created have any power? (No.)
 - ◇ Do the figures you created deserve our worship? (No.)
- ◆ The people in Athens did not worship the Lord. They made and worshiped many idols, things that were created by human hands. Paul taught the people in Athens that the one true God created everything and sent Jesus to be the Savior. God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved from sin.

Blanket Tents (Younger Students)

- ◆ Use large blankets, chairs and tables to create a makeshift tent. Have students sit in the tent (take turns if they cannot all fit together). While they are in the tent, share information about tents in biblical times (Miller, Dave. "Living in Tents in Bible Times," apologeticspress.org).
 - ◇ Has your family ever let you set up a tent in the backyard so you could camp out overnight? The Bible is filled with references to people living in tents.
 - ◇ Tents were made of animal skins (usually from goats).
 - ◇ Unlike the nylon pop-up tents and other flimsy tents for modern camping, the tents of ancient times were much stronger, larger (more like circus tents!) and contained multiple rooms. These separate apartments were divided from each other by goat hair curtains.
 - ◇ The women and children, as well as servants, could have their own living areas. Though separated by curtains, Sarah could hear what was being said in the reception apartment of Abraham's tent (Genesis 18:10–15).
 - ◇ It took several tents to care for the large family of Jacob, including maidservants (Genesis 31:33).
- ◆ Paul was a missionary, but he also worked as a tentmaker. In our story, we will hear about two other tentmakers whom Paul worked with and their role in spreading the gospel of Jesus with Paul.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Ephesians 2:8–9

For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

Ball Pass (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Instruct the class to sit or stand in a circle. Display the key passage poster and say the key passage together. Then, hide the poster and choose one student to begin. Hand her a ball. She should say the first word of the key passage, then pass the ball to the next student, who will say the next word in the verse. Continue around the circle until the whole passage and reference has been completed.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How do people hear about Jesus?

A: *God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Paul Preached in Europe | Acts 17:1-18:22

After leaving Philippi, **Paul and Silas went to Thessalonica** and shared the good news about Jesus in the Jewish synagogue. Paul explained why the Messiah had to suffer and die from the Old Testament scriptures. **When Jews and Greeks believed and joined Paul, the Jewish leaders became jealous and started a riot in the city. The crowd dragged any believers they could find to the city officials,** but they could not find Paul and Silas anywhere. The crowd blamed another believer named Jason, **saying “These men cause trouble wherever they go. They are going against the Emperor’s rules saying there is another king named Jesus!”** The city officials punished the believers by making them pay money and let them go.

After the riot, **the church in Thessalonica sent Paul and his friends on to Berea during the night** so they would be safe. **They went to the Jewish synagogue and shared the good news about Jesus. The Bereans listened eagerly and carefully compared Paul’s message with the Scriptures every day to see if the message was true. Many Jews and Greeks believed the good news.**

The Jewish leaders in Thessalonica heard that Paul was preaching in Berea, so they came and turned the crowds against Paul. The Berean church sent Paul to the city of Athens, while Silas and Timothy stayed to teach the Bereans more about Jesus.

When Paul got to Athens, he was upset by what he saw. **The people there** did not worship the one true God. Instead, they **worshiped many idols. Paul** talked with the people who lived in Athens and **told them the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.**

The men asked Paul to explain what he was talking about. **Paul met with them and said, “Men of Athens, I can see that you are very religious. I saw in your city an altar that said: ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ You worship a god that you do not know. This is the God I want to tell you about.”**

So, Paul told the people about the one true God. He explained that God made everything, and that He is bigger than man-made temples. **God is not like the idols in Athens. He is not made of gold, silver or stone. God does not need anything, and He is not far away. Paul also said that God wants everyone in the world to repent,** to turn away from their sin and turn to Him. God made all people, and they should all look to Him.

Paul said, “One day, God is going to judge the world in a way that is right. He has chosen Jesus to do this, and He proved this by raising Jesus from the dead!” When the people heard about Jesus being raised from the dead, some of them laughed. But others wanted to hear more and believed in Jesus.

Next, Paul traveled to the city of Corinth where he met a Jewish man named Aquila (uh KWIL uh) and his wife, Priscilla. They were tentmakers, and so was Paul, so **Paul stayed and worked with them. On each Sabbath, Paul went to the synagogue to share the good news about Jesus.** Silas and Timothy

joined Paul, but the Jewish leaders rejected the message. So, Paul began to teach the Greeks about Jesus. Many Corinthians believed the good news.

One night God spoke to Paul in a vision, saying, “Don’t be afraid, but keep on speaking and don’t be silent. I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to hurt you, because I have many people in this city.” Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, and the church there grew.

Then, Paul left his friends Silas and Timothy in Corinth and traveled to the city of Ephesus (EF uh suhs) with Aquila and Priscilla. When Paul preached about Jesus in the Jewish synagogue, the Jews asked to learn more. So Aquila and Priscilla stayed in Ephesus while Paul journeyed back to Syrian Antioch and spent time with the church there.

JESUS CONNECTION



The men of Athens worshiped a false god whom they did not know. Paul explained God’s plan of salvation to them. He said that God is not like the Greek idols. Only God deserves our worship! Paul talked about Jesus and the resurrection. All people can know God because Jesus took the punishment for sin that separates people from God.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

WISDOM – Knowledge and skill for doing life God’s way.

Living LifeWise

God is the source of true wisdom, and His Word helps us learn how to live His way.

Character Connection

Wisdom is more than just knowing a lot of information. It’s about living out the best principles (God’s principles) for life and making good choices. Wisdom means both knowing what to do and doing it.

The men in Athens thought they were very wise. They talked about big ideas all the time. They were known for their desire to think and live well. But while they pursued wisdom, they didn’t know God. They were missing the heart of true wisdom. That’s what Paul promised to help them understand.

Sometimes people make something sound good that isn’t wise. The Athenians weren’t sure which gods were real, and didn’t want to miss any, so they worshiped everything. Our friends or other people may try to get us to do foolish things, too. But God reveals true wisdom in His Word. He helps us understand how to live God’s way and to recognize unwise ideas when others suggest them.

Decide which idea is wise and which sounds wise, but really isn’t.

- ◆ I should follow traffic laws when on my bike OR It’s okay to ride on the street if I’m just going to my friend’s house down the road.
- ◆ I can read any book I want, especially if my friend tells me it’s good OR It’s okay not to read a popular book because the story is not appropriate for me.

- ◆ I have to know what I want to do with my life and pursue that wholeheartedly OR I can try lots of things to learn what I like and what I'm good at.
- ◆ God loves me and will help me live His way OR God isn't a big deal because I'm a student, so I can wait to accept Him until I'm older.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ How did the Jewish leaders make trouble for Christians in Thessalonica?
They started a riot in the city, Acts 16:5
- ◆ What did Paul see in Athens that made him upset?
The people there worshiped many idols, Acts 17:16
- ◆ What does God want everyone to do?
Repent and turn to God, Acts 17:30
- ◆ Who will judge the world?
Jesus, Acts 17:31
- ◆ How did the people of Athens respond to the gospel?
Some laughed, others wanted to hear more, Acts 17:32-34
- ◆ What is the gospel message?
Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead
- ◆ What did God promise Paul in a vision?
No one would hurt Paul and God would be with him, Acts 18:9-10
- ◆ How long did Paul stay in Corinth?
One and a half years, Acts 18:11

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

The Known God (Older Students)

- ◆ Form groups of three or four. Give each group a piece of paper and a pencil. Instruct groups to choose one person to write. The writer should list the letters of the alphabet down the side of the paper. Challenge the class to work together to make a list of things they know about God. Encourage students to refer to the Bible for ideas or suggest they use names for God, descriptions of God or things God has done. Letters are intended to be prompts; students do not need to fill them all. After several minutes, invite groups to share their lists. [Example descriptions: Almighty, creator, deliverer, eternal, faithful, good, love, provider, unchanging, wise.]
- ◆ We've learned so much about God! God is not a far-off stranger. In the Bible story we heard today, the men of Athens worshiped a false god whom they did not know. Paul explained to the men God's plan of salvation. He said that God is not like the Greek idols. Only God deserves our worship! Paul talked about Jesus and the resurrection. All people can know God because Jesus took the punishment for sin. We can know God more by reading the Bible, God's Word.

Tic Tac Toe (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Remind the class that the book of Acts is the fifth book in the New Testament. It tells how the Holy Spirit worked in the lives of those in the early church. It also details how the good news of Jesus spread from Jews to Gentiles, and from Jerusalem to all the world.
- ◆ Write nine Bible review questions on large colored cards and hang them on the board or wall. Make five Xs and five Os. Divide students into two teams. Teams may choose any question on the board to answer. If the team answers correctly, they will put their X or O over that question. To win, a team must get a tic tac toe by answering three questions in a row.

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Devise hand motions to help the class remember the parts of the gospel. Repeat the steps with your group multiple times, perhaps stating them as fast as possible or in slow motion. Repeat them until everyone feels comfortable going through the steps on their own. Suggested hand motions:
 - ◇ God rules. [*Move hands to head as though placing a crown.*]
 - ◇ We sinned. [*Cross arms over chest to make an X shape.*]
 - ◇ God provided. [*Shift X to look like a cross with left arm vertically oriented.*]
 - ◇ Jesus gives. [*Hold hands together as if cupping water and move them outward from belly.*]
 - ◇ We respond. [*Lift up hands in celebration or worship.*]
- ◆ Paul traveled through Europe preaching the gospel to all people. God wants us to be a part of spreading the gospel too! It is helpful to know what you want to say before you share about God, because it can make it less scary to tell another person about Jesus. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit will also help us know what to say. Let's all try to think of one person we could share the gospel with this week. Remember that how the person responds to your sharing the gospel is not in your control. We cannot make people believe, but we still tell about Jesus so they have the opportunity to believe and be saved from sin.

Alphabetical Attributes (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Guide the students to sit in a circle. One student starts by saying a word that describes God and starts with the letter A. The next student will think of a word that describes God and starts with B and so forth. Be ready to help students with trickier letters, like Q, X or Z. For example, you may include words starting with ex- for the letter X.
- ◆ Wow! We know lots about God. It's amazing to think of how much He has revealed to us in His Word. The people of Athens worshiped an unknown god, but the Bible teaches that God knows us and wants us to know Him as our Father. Paul taught the people in Athens that the one true God sent Jesus to be the Savior. God wants to have a personal relationship with each of us through Jesus. How amazing is that?!

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ Better and Better (Older Students)
- ◆ Real or Fake? (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for revealing Yourself to us in Your Word. Help us get to know You more. You are a God who knows us, and we are thankful that we can know You. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why is it foolish to trust in idols or false gods?
- How can we know God is real?
- What are some things we might trust in besides God?



PAUL PREACHED IN EUROPE

ACTS 17:1-18:22

MAIN POINT: PAUL TAUGHT THE PEOPLE IN ATHENS THAT THE ONE TRUE GOD SENT JESUS TO BE THE SAVIOR.

Paul had been traveling from place to place, sharing the gospel. When Paul got to Athens, he was upset by what he saw. The people there worshiped many idols. Paul told them the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

Paul said, "Men of Athens, I saw in your city an altar that said: 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' You worship a god whom you do not know. This is the God I want to tell you about."

So, Paul told the people about the one true God. He explained that God is not like the idols in Athens. He is not made of gold, silver or stone. God does not need anything, and He is not far away. Paul also said that God wants everyone in the world to repent, to turn away from their sin and turn to Him.

Paul said, "One day, God is going to judge the world in a way that is right. He has chosen Jesus to do this, and He proved this by raising Jesus from the dead!"

When the people heard about Jesus being raised from the dead, some of them laughed. But some of them wanted to hear more later. So, Paul went away from their meeting. However, some people joined Paul, and they believed in Jesus.

Jesus Connection: *The men of Athens worshiped a false god whom they did not know. Paul explained to the men God's plan of salvation. He said that God is not like the Greek idols. Only God deserves our worship! Paul talked about Jesus and the resurrection. All people can know God because Jesus took the punishment for sin that separates people from God.*

Key Passage: *Ephesians 2:8-9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.*

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BETTER AND BETTER

List or draw a picture of the five most important things to you.



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DID YOU KNOW?

Circle the statements you already knew. Put a checkmark next to statements you didn't know were true.

- The people in Athens worshiped many idols.
- Paul taught the Greeks that the one true God sent Jesus to be the Savior.
- God made everything.
- God does not need anything, and He is not far away.
- God wants everyone in the world to repent, to turn away from sin and turn to Him.
- One day, God is going to judge the world in a way that is right.



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REAL OR FAKE

KEY PASSAGE:

Ephesians 2:8-9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.

BIBLE STORY:

PAUL PREACHED IN EUROPE

- Paul was sad that the people of Athens had many idols.
- They had an altar to “an unknown god.”
- Paul taught the men of Athens that the one true God sent Jesus to be the Savior.
- Some believed Paul, but others rejected the truth.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why is it foolish to trust in idols or false gods?
- How can we know God is real?
- What are some things we trust in besides God?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Go on a nature walk with your family. Discuss how different parts of nature reveal some things about God.
- Pick a historical figure that your family knows little about and research that person together.

Paul Preached in Europe

L 101 | WISDOM

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the pictures of animals that really exist. Cross out the animals that do not exist.



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PAUL TAUGHT THE PEOPLE IN ATHENS THAT THE
ONE TRUE GOD SENT JESUS TO BE THE SAVIOR.

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I HAVE BROWN EYES.	I AM WEARING SHOES WITH LACES.	I HAVE BROWN HAIR.	I KNOW HOW TO SWIM.	I PLAY SOCCER.
I TAKE DANCE LESSONS.	I HAVE NEVER BROKEN A BONE.	I HAVE BLUE EYES.	I HAVE A DOG.	MY NAME HAS AN "E" IN IT.
I AM AN ONLY CHILD.	I HAVE SISTERS, BUT NO BROTHERS.	JESUS LOVES ME. [SIGN YOUR OWN INITIALS.]	MY HAIR COVERS MY EARS.	I CAN ROLL MY TONGUE.
I CAN WHISTLE.	I'M ON A SPORTS TEAM.	I LIKE TO READ.	I CAN SAY THE ALPHABET BACKWARDS.	I LIKE TO DRAW.
I HAVE BROTHERS, BUT NO SISTERS.	I HAVE A PET THAT IS NOT A DOG OR A CAT.	SOMETHING I AM WEARING TODAY HAS FLOWERS ON IT.	I CAN RIDE A BIKE.	I CAN PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

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I CAN WHISTLE.	I AM AN ONLY CHILD.	I LIKE TO READ.	I TAKE DANCE LESSONS.	I HAVE SISTERS, BUT NO BROTHERS.
MY BIRTHDAY IS IN THE SUMMER.	I HAVE NEVER BROKEN A BONE.	I LIKE SCIENCE.	MY NAME HAS AN "S" IN IT.	I CAN ROLL MY TONGUE.
I AM WEARING SOMETHING THAT IS RED.	I HAVE BROTHERS, BUT NO SISTERS.	JESUS LOVES ME. [SIGN YOUR OWN INITIALS.]	I HAVE A PET THAT IS NOT A DOG OR A CAT.	I LIKE TO DRAW
I HAVE BLUE EYES.	I KNOW HOW TO SKI.	SOMETHING I AM WEARING TODAY HAS FLOWERS ON IT.	I CAN PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.	I AM ON A SPORTS TEAM.
I AM WEARING SHOES WITH LACES.	I HAVE BROWN EYES	I HAVE A CAT.	I PLAY SOCCER.	MY HAIR COVERS MY EARS.

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MY HAIR IS CURLY.	I CAN RIDE A BIKE.	I PLAY SOCCER.	I HAVE BROWN EYES	I AM WEARING SHOES WITH LACES.
I CAN PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.	SOMETHING I AM WEARING TODAY HAS FLOWERS ON IT.	I AM WEARING SOMETHING THAT IS GREEN.	I LIKE TO DRAW	I HAVE A PET THAT IS NOT A DOG OR A CAT.
I HAVE RED HAIR.	MY HAIR IS STRAIGHT.	JESUS LOVES ME. [SIGN YOUR OWN INITIALS.]	I HAVE BROTHERS, BUT NO SISTERS.	I KNOW HOW TO SWIM
I CAN ROLL MY TONGUE.	MY NAME HAS THE LETTER "R" IN IT.	I HAVE HAD A BROKEN BONE.	MY BIRTHDAY IS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR.	I HAVE SISTERS, BUT NO BROTHERS.
I CAN WHISTLE.	I TAKE DANCE LESSONS.	I LIKE TO EAT BROCCOLI.	I LIKE TO READ.	I HAVE BRACES.

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LESSON 102: SACRIFICE

PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY

Acts 18:22–20:38

PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY



- ♦ Acts 18:22–20:38
- ♦ Big Picture Q&A: How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.
- ♦ Key Passage: Ephesians 2:8–9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

JESUS CONNECTION



As Paul traveled on his third missionary journey, he used every opportunity to tell people the good news about Jesus and to help the church. Paul was dedicated to Jesus, who called him to do the work of sharing the gospel.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

SACRIFICE – Giving of myself to help someone else.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Paul's third missionary journey was unlike his first two because he didn't set out to plant churches. Instead, his mission was to encourage and strengthen existing churches. Paul wrote letters to the churches, but he knew some guidance was best given in person. His journey began when he traveled back through the regions of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening the churches.

Paul traveled to other churches and encouraged the believers. While Paul traveled, Aquila and Priscilla interacted with a Jewish believer named Apollos. Apollos was a leader in the early church, and Aquila and Priscilla helped him better understand Jesus and the Scriptures. Apollos went on to greatly help other believers by showing through Scripture that Jesus is the Messiah.

The Holy Spirit led Paul to go to Jerusalem. This wasn't an easy call to obey. The Spirit revealed to Paul that imprisonment and suffering awaited in Jerusalem (Acts 20:23). Hadn't Paul done enough? He had spent years preaching the gospel, and many people believed. Wasn't now a good time for Paul to retire comfortably on a beach somewhere?

But Paul did not cling to his own life. He used every opportunity to tell people the good news about Jesus and to help the church. God helped Paul preach with courage even when he was in danger. Paul was dedicated to Jesus, who called him to do the work of sharing the gospel. Paul boarded the ship to Jerusalem, uncertain of the future but certain of the goodness and grace of the Lord Jesus.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Does anyone remember how many missionary journeys we've learned about? (Two.) What are some of the amazing things God did while Paul traveled to share the good news? (People chose to believe in Paul, God

protected Paul, people were healed.) What difficult things happened to Paul during his journeys? (*Paul was forced out of cities, beaten, put in jail, persecuted, stoned, etc.*) Does anyone remember what places Paul shared the gospel during our last lesson? (*Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth and Ephesus.*) What was Paul upset about when he arrived in Athens? (*The people worshiped many idols.*) How did the people of Athens respond when Paul taught them about the one true God and Savior? (*Some laughed, but others believed.*)

By the time Paul took his third missionary journey, about 20 years had passed since Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. His third journey was a little different than the first two trips. This time, instead of beginning new churches, he visited all the churches that had already been started.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Worth It! (Older Students)

- ◆ Use tape to mark a line across the room. Use pieces of tape to mark the one-quarter, halfway and three-quarter points on the line. Prepare the following signs to display along the line: *Definitely* (start); *Probably* (one-quarter); *Maybe* (halfway); *Probably Not* (three-quarters); *Definitely Not* (end). Explain that for each statement you read, students should stand on the line to indicate whether or not they would do what the statement says.
 - ◇ Eat a tuna pickle burger to make your friend laugh.
 - ◇ Skip a party to help a grandparent do yard work.
 - ◇ Skip recess to help a friend with math homework.
 - ◇ Travel 8 hours to visit your favorite theme park.
 - ◇ Do extra chores to earn more screen time.
 - ◇ Sit with a new student at lunch.
 - ◇ Face pain and suffering to tell others about Jesus.
- ◆ Did anyone have a hard time deciding if you would do that last one? As we will see in today's Bible story, following Jesus isn't easy—but it is worth it!

Courage Ahead (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Invite the class to stand. As you read each scenario, they should silently act out how they would react. Pause to allow students to respond to each scenario.
 - ◇ You jump into a pool with your eyes closed.
 - ◇ You walk into a dark room.
 - ◇ You hear something outside of your camping tent.
 - ◇ You walk into a crowded room of strangers.
 - ◇ You step into a muddy lake.
- ◆ How do you feel going into something when you don't know the outcome? In today's Bible story, Paul wasn't sure what was ahead of him, but he knew God would be with him. We will hear about Paul's courageous journey.

A Round and a Round (Younger Students)

- ◆ Teach the class the following simple song, to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Then, teach them how to sing the song as a round. Split the group into three parts, instructing the second and third group to start singing one measure after the first group.

- ◆ Song: “Preach, preach, preach the Word every place you go! Here-a-bit, there-a-bit, ev-er-y where-a-bit, See the gospel grow.”
- ◆ A round is a fun way to sing a song where each part starts before the previous part has ended. When you sing a round, the song can go on and on in circles. God’s plan for Paul’s life took him around and around the Mediterranean Sea. Today, we will hear about his third missionary journey.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Ephesians 2:8–9

For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

Word-For-Word Relay (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Show the key passage poster and say it aloud together. Form two teams. Teams will line up on one side of the room, opposite a large paper or whiteboard. Give the first player in each line a writing utensil. When you say “go,” the first player should race to the board and write the first word of the verse, return to his team and hand the writing utensil to the next player. She should run to the board, write the next word and race back. Students will continue the relay until both teams finish the verse. Gently correct any mistakes during the race.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How do people hear about Jesus?

A: God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Paul’s Third Journey | Acts 18:22–20:38

After Paul spent some time with the church in Syrian Antioch, he visited churches throughout Galatia and Phrygia to help the believers grow stronger in their faith.

While Paul was traveling, a Jew named Apollos (uh PAHL uhs) came to Ephesus. Apollos knew the Scriptures well. Apollos liked to tell people about Jesus, and what he taught was true. But he did not understand everything about Jesus, so Priscilla and Aquila took him to their home and explained more to him. Apollos traveled to Corinth and taught others, using the Scriptures to show that Jesus is the Messiah.

When Paul arrived in Ephesus, he found some men who believed in God and taught them more about Jesus. Then, he shared the gospel in the Jewish synagogue for three months. When Paul saw that the Jews refused to believe, he left the synagogue and taught in the hall of Tyrannus for two years. Jews and Greeks all over Asia heard the good news about Jesus.

While Paul was in Ephesus, God did many miracles through him. The sick were healed and evil spirits came out of people. Those who had practiced magic turned away from it, collected their books and burned them. God’s Word spread, and many believed in Jesus.

About this time, an idol maker in Ephesus named Demetrius became upset that Paul was teaching people not to worship idols. He stirred up the crowd and started a riot in the city. They dragged Paul's companions to the amphitheater. They were angry and accused Paul of insulting Artemis, the idol they worshiped. For two hours, they shouted "Great is Artemis," until a city official encouraged the crowd to take their complaints to the city courts and sent them away.

After the riot, Paul sent for the believers, encouraged them and said goodbye. He traveled to the churches in Macedonia and strengthened them. He spent three months in Greece until the Jews there threatened to hurt him. Then, he went back to Philippi and stayed for one week with the church there.

Next, Paul journeyed to Troas and taught the believers there. One day, he spoke about God's Word until midnight. A young man named Eutychus was sitting on a window sill. He fell into a deep sleep as Paul talked and fell down from a third story window and died. Paul went down, bent over and hugged Eutychus. Then, he said to the believers, "Don't be afraid, because he's alive." Everyone was comforted because the boy had been brought back to life!

After this, Paul traveled back toward Ephesus. He decided not to stop in Ephesus, but he asked the leaders of the church there to meet him in the nearby city of Miletus. Paul said to them, "I am obeying the Spirit and am going to sail to Jerusalem. I do not know what will happen to me there, but I know that trouble and jail wait for me. I do not care about my own life. The most important thing is that I finish the work Jesus gave me to do. I want to tell people the good news of God's grace."

Paul encouraged the leaders, saying "God Himself and His Word are able to build you up and give you every spiritual gift needed to follow Jesus. Remember to stay alert and guard the Church from false teaching. Stand up for the truth I have taught you!"

Paul and the church leaders prayed together, and they cried because they knew they might never see Paul again. Then, they went with him to the ship to say goodbye.



JESUS CONNECTION

As Paul traveled on his third missionary journey, he used every opportunity to tell people the good news about Jesus and to help the church. Paul was dedicated to Jesus, who called him to do the work of sharing the gospel.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

SACRIFICE – Giving of myself to help someone else.

Living LifeWise

Because God provides for all our needs, we can sacrifice for others.

Character Connection

Usually, a "good cause" is one where a group is helping people in a good or important way and we want to be involved. But getting involved usually involves sacrifice. We give our money or show up and volunteer our time or abilities to help the group help others. It costs us something.

Doing his part in God's big plan (the Great Commission) was the most important thing to Paul. Jesus had sacrificed to provide what Paul needed, so he was willing to give up everything (his time, comfort, safety, even his life) to share with people about Jesus. Jesus provides everything we need too. Because of that, we can be willing to sacrifice to help others, share His love and talk about Jesus.

We probably won't travel all over or face threats or go to jail, like Paul did. But God can help us sacrifice in different ways. Which of these ideas are good ways we can sacrifice for others this week? Which ones do not show a sacrifice?

- ◆ Holding open a door to let someone else go through first.
- ◆ Breaking your snack to share it, but taking the bigger piece because it was yours.
- ◆ Offering to help a neighbor.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ **Why did Paul go on a third missionary journey?**
To strengthen the churches, Acts 18:23
- ◆ **What kind of miracles did God do through Paul in Ephesus?**
He healed the sick and cast out evil spirits, Acts 19:11
- ◆ **What did people in Ephesus burn to show they wanted to follow Jesus?**
Their magic books, Acts 19:19
- ◆ **Who started a riot against Paul in Ephesus?**
Demitrius, an idol maker, Acts 19:23-28
- ◆ **What happened to Eutychus, after he fell out of the window and died?**
Paul brought him back to life through Jesus' power, Acts 20:9-10
- ◆ **Paul met with the church leaders from what city?**
Ephesus, Acts 20:17
- ◆ **The Holy Spirit led Paul toward what city?**
Jerusalem, Acts 20:22
- ◆ **How did Paul encourage the church leaders in Ephesus during their last meeting?**
He reminded them to rely on God and His Word and to guard the church, and he prayed with them, Acts 20:25-36

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Missionary Journey Jeopardy (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before class, write three categories (People, Places, Blessings & Hardships) on separate papers and hang them on the board or wall. Under each category, write on the board or hang papers with point values to represent the questions. On a separate piece of paper, list the questions by category and point values (see below). Questions can be written on paper for the students to read, or you can read the questions to them. Be sure each category has questions that are easy (200 points), moderately challenging (400 and 600 points) and difficult (800 and 1000 points).
- ◆ Split the class into two or three teams. Teams will take turns choosing the category and point value to answer. Students may answer as a group or individually, but will only have 30 seconds to

answer. If they are correct, the team earns the points listed. If incorrect, the next team will have a chance to answer and (if correct) choose a question for their turn. There are no point deductions for incorrect answers. For extra fun, secretly designate some “daily double” questions that are worth twice the listed amount of points.

♦ Suggested Questions:

❖ People

- 200 – Whom did Paul share the good news with? (*Jews and Gentiles, or everyone*)
- 400 – What was the occupation of Aquila and his wife, Priscilla? (*Tentmaker*)
- 600 – Who helped Paul on his first missionary journey? (*Barnabas*)
- 800 – How did Paul help the jailer in Philippi? (*He remained in his cell, saved his life and shared the gospel with him*)
- 1,000 – Who chose Paul and Barnabas to be missionaries? (*The Holy Spirit*)

❖ Places

- 200 – Where did Paul go every Sabbath? (*The synagogue*)
- 400 – Where did Paul return after his missionary journeys? (*Syrian Antioch*)
- 600 – Where did God tell Paul to go in a vision? (*Macedonia, Philippi*)
- 800 – Where did Paul and Barnabas meet Lydia? (*By the river*)
- 1,000 – Paul met with elders of a church at the end of his third journey. What city were they from? (*Ephesus*)

❖ Blessings and Hardships

- 200 – What did the Holy Spirit tell Paul was waiting for him in Jerusalem? (*Trouble, prison*)
- 400 – What did the Jews from Antioch and Iconium do to Paul? (*Stoned him and dragged him out of town*)
- 600 – What happened after Paul was stoned? (*Believers prayed for Paul, Paul was still alive and got up*)
- 800 – In Lystra, Paul healed a man who had what problem? (*He could not walk*)
- 1,000 – Why were Paul and Silas put in prison on Paul’s second missionary journey? (*They cast out an evil spirit from a servant girl who was telling the future*)

Facing Resistance (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Before the session, tightly wrap a candy bar in wrapping paper. Use generous amounts of tape and wrap the candy bar in multiple layers so it is difficult to open. Guide the class to stand in a circle. Give one student the wrapped candy bar. Play music and instruct the class to pass the candy around the circle. When you pause the music, the student holding the candy may begin unwrapping it. The rest of the class should count down from five. When they reach zero, start the music again. The class should resume passing the candy. Continue to pause the music, allowing students five-second intervals to unwrap the candy before passing it around the circle. Play until all the wrapping paper is removed. You may choose to provide individually wrapped candies for students to take home.
- ♦ Unwrapping that candy was not an easy task, but you worked so hard! You knew that the reward waiting for you was greater than any difficulty you would face to get it. In our Bible story today, God helped Paul preach with courage even when he was in danger. Paul looked forward to the day

when he would experience his reward: eternal life with Jesus. We can dedicate our lives to making Jesus known because any suffering we face in this life doesn't compare to the joy that waits for us in eternity.

Missionary Role-Play (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Describe a few scenarios for the class. Invite volunteers to act out or discuss each scenario to show how they could honor God and share the gospel in each situation.
 - ◇ A bully at school pushes you at lunch to take your spot in line.
 - ◇ A friend tells you that his parents have been fighting a lot and he feels very alone.
 - ◇ You hear someone at recess say, "Only dorks go to church!"
 - ◇ You forgot to finish your spelling homework, but a friend offers to let you copy hers.
- ◆ God helped Paul preach with courage even when he was in danger. Every day we encounter all kinds of situations where we can choose to honor God with our lives. Sometimes, it is much easier to ignore the Holy Spirit than it is to trust Him and speak out in hard times. The wonderful thing about the gospel is that it is the message of God's power to change our lives and give us hope for the future. No matter what we face, we can know that our eternity is with God.

Cards For Missionaries (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Research how to get mail to missionaries in or from the nearby community. Supply the class with paper, markers and other craft supplies and help them write encouraging notes to missionaries.
- ◆ Being a missionary is often a difficult calling. God gives us the Holy Spirit to help us push through hard times and obey Him even when we are afraid. God helped Paul preach with courage even when he was in danger, and the church prayed for and encouraged Paul. We can pray for and encourage missionaries too!

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ **Third Journey Word Search (Older Students)**
 - ◇ Answers: 1. *Corinth, Ephesus*; 2. *Troas*; 3. *Ephesus, Jerusalem*.
- ◆ **What's Wrong? (Younger Students)**

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, help us to trust Your plan even when we feel uncomfortable. We believe that You are good and in control. Use us to take the good news of Jesus to all the nations. Amen.

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Journal Page

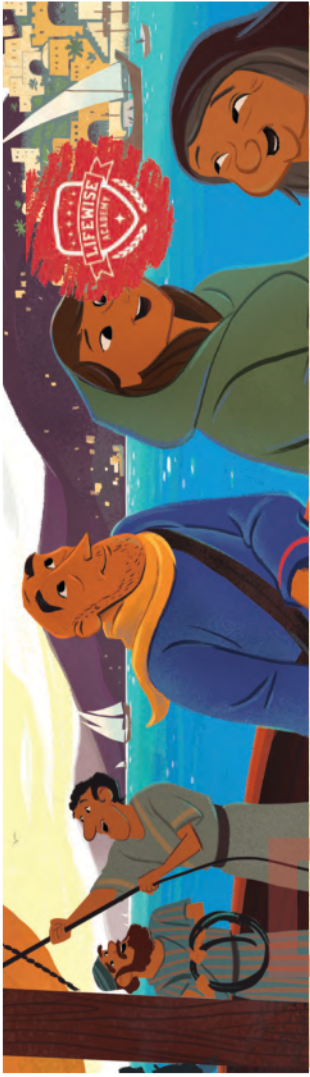
- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What dangers did Paul face while sharing the gospel?
- What dangers might we face while sharing the gospel?
- How can we be brave as we follow Jesus?



PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY

ACTS 18:22-20:38

MAIN POINT: GOD HELPED PAUL PREACH WITH COURAGE EVEN WHEN HE WAS IN DANGER.

Paul traveled from Athens to the city of Corinth. There, he met a Jewish man named Aquila and his wife, Priscilla. Paul stayed with them. On the Sabbath days, Paul went to the synagogue to talk to the Jews and Greeks. He tried to persuade them to believe in Jesus. Some of the people believed, and the church grew in Corinth.

Paul traveled with his friends from Corinth to Ephesus. Aquila and Priscilla stayed in Ephesus while Paul visited churches throughout Asia. Paul helped the believers in the cities grow stronger in their faith.

While Paul was traveling, a Jew named Apollos came to Ephesus. Apollos liked to tell people about Jesus. But he did not understand everything about Jesus, so Priscilla and Aquila explained more to him. Apollos traveled and taught others, using the Scriptures to show that Jesus is the Messiah.

Now, Paul traveled back toward Ephesus. He asked the leaders of the church there to meet him in a nearby city. Paul said to them, "I am obeying the Spirit and am going to sail to Jerusalem. I do not know what will happen to me there, but I know that trouble and jail wait for me. I do not care about my own life. The most important thing is that I finish the work Jesus gave me to do."

Paul and the church leaders prayed together. Then, they went with him to the ship to say goodbye.

Jesus Connection: As Paul traveled on his third missionary journey, he used every opportunity to tell people the good news about Jesus and to help the church. Paul was dedicated to Jesus, who called him to do the work of sharing the gospel.

Key Passage: Ephesians 2:8-9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

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THIRD JOURNEY WORD SEARCH

Circle the words hidden in the puzzle.

T P S V O O H Y A W N A A J X
 U Q F J T Y P C X A P Y S W J H
 M D E U I F N S B K J A I U T
 T A T H E N O D T R B A A U L
 Z V P R M O C I T X C S Y L L
 A U T R L C I O Q A E H F R H O
 Y R F L I R O Q A E H F R H O
 Q A O R I S I R M J S A J S O
 B P T P S O C M I U H T E X K
 A X S H R P J S E L V N B S H X
 L Q Y L N J N H K P L E H S D B
 J H W H J N Q Y K E A V J P Q
 C O O Y T P S B E R G M Y T Z L
 G T G V E S W E R H I P X E D X
 V U Y J E W S G H I P X E D X

WORD LIST

JESUS
 JEW
 MESSIAH
 PAUL
 PRISCILLA
 SPIRIT
 APOLLOS
 AQUILA
 ATHENS
 ASIA
 CORINTH
 EPHESUS
 GREEKS

MARK THE WAY III

Unscramble the clues to draw the route of Paul's third missionary journey.

- 1 PAUL BEGAN IN THE CITY OF _____ AND WENT TO _____
 _____ NORICHT _____ SPHEELUS
- 2 PAUL VISITED CHURCHES THROUGH ASIA INCLUDING _____
 _____ RATOS
3. PAUL RETURNED TO _____ AND THEN WENT TO _____
 _____ SPHEELUS _____ LEMJERASU



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WHAT'S WRONG?

INSTRUCTIONS: Find and circle the six dangerous things that should not be in the Bible story art.



KEY PASSAGE:

Ephesians 2:8-9 – For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How do people hear about Jesus?
- God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.

BIBLE STORY:

PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY

- Paul continued traveling and sharing the gospel.
- Paul met people who helped him spread the Word, like Aquila, Priscilla and Apollos.
- Paul knew he would face danger in the future.
- God helped Paul preach with courage, even when he was in danger.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What dangers did Paul face while sharing the gospel?
- What dangers might we face while sharing the gospel?
- How can we be brave?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Take your family on a camping trip where you sleep in a tent. Discuss Paul's job as a tentmaker and how God used that to provide for him. Ask how God provides for you.

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LIFEWISE
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POWERED BY THE GOSPEL PROJECT

**GOD HELPED PAUL PREACH WITH
COURAGE EVEN WHEN HE WAS IN DANGER.**

L 102 Paul's Third Journey | SACRIFICE

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LESSON 103: TRUTHFULNESS

PAUL CONFRONTED PETER

Galatians 2:11–21

PAUL CONFRONTED PETER



- ♦ Galatians 2:11–21
- ♦ Big Picture Q&A: Why does God want us to obey Him? Obedience is our response to God's love for us.
- ♦ Key Passage: Galatians 2:20 – I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

JESUS CONNECTION



Peter was wrong to separate himself from the Gentiles. The gospel is for everyone, and we should show love to everyone. Paul reminded Peter that only Jesus can save people from sin. God accepts people who have faith in Jesus, not people who try to earn salvation on their own.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

TRUTHFULNESS – Choosing not to lie or deceive others.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Peter, one of Jesus' original disciples, had grown up in a culture where the Jews believed that God only cared about them, not the Gentiles. Because of this, most of the Jews looked down on the Gentiles and refused to even associate with them. Jews believed Gentiles were unclean; Gentiles didn't live the right way to please God. Any Jew who did associate with Gentiles did so at the risk of being ridiculed by his own people.

After Jesus' resurrection and ascension, God shared with Peter that He loved not only the Jews, but the Gentiles as well (Acts 10:9–16). Peter took to heart this message from God and began associating with Gentiles, even eating with Gentile believers—that is, until some Jewish believers came around. When he was among Jews, Peter did not eat with the Gentiles and even told them they were supposed to follow certain Jewish laws. But he knew that was not true! Peter also led Barnabas, known for encouraging believers and bringing them together, into acting the same way.

When the Apostle Paul learned about this, he confronted Peter in person. Paul reminded Peter that they both knew that God accepts people not based on how they live, but by faith (Rom. 3:21–22). Peter's actions contradicted that core gospel message.

Paul shared this story with the believers in Galatia (a major province of Rome in modern Turkey) to remind them, and us, of the same truth. Salvation is not based on ethnicity or external obedience to the law. Salvation comes from faith in Jesus Christ, a faith that is freely available to people of every tongue, tribe and nation.

As you teach this week, encourage your students not to wonder if they have what it takes to be saved from sin. Salvation is found in Jesus. Remind them that because God loves all people, we—in Jesus—can love all people too.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Does anyone remember how many missionary journeys we've learned about? (*Three.*) What are some of the amazing things God did while Paul traveled to share the good news? (*People believed in Jesus, God protected Paul, people were healed.*) What difficult things happened to Paul along the way? (*He was run out of cities, beaten, put in jail, persecuted, stoned, etc.*)

After the Holy Spirit came and Jesus' disciples began sharing the gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and beyond, the early church grew. People didn't always get along as more and more people became part of the church. The leaders in the church reminded the believers that they can get along and love one another because Jesus is our ultimate leader, and we all have the same mission: to share the gospel with the entire world. Today's Bible story is about a letter Paul wrote to believers in Galatia.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Caught! (Older Students)

- ♦ The class will sit in a circle and try to pass a sign or gesture (tap your nose, wiggle your tongue, wave your right hand, etc.) between players without getting caught. Choose one player to start the gesture and a volunteer to stand in the middle and look for the sign. When the volunteer's back is turned, the first player will look at another player in the circle and make the sign. That player will "catch" the sign by doing it and pass it to a different player. If the volunteer sees someone making the sign, the caught player moves to the middle. Continue as time allows.
- ♦ That was tricky! It wasn't easy not to get caught. Today, we are going to hear a Bible story about a time Peter did not want to get caught eating with his friends who were not Jews. That sounds strange. Let's find out what happened.

How Many Ways? (Older Students)

- ♦ Split into groups of three or four. Provide each team with a pencil and paper. Assign each group a simple task (e.g., tying a shoe, making a paper airplane, kicking a ball, inflating a balloon, eating a piece of candy). Ask them to brainstorm as many different ways as they can to accomplish simple tasks. After a few moments, let each group explain their ideas.
- ♦ Many tasks can be done in more than one way. There is only one way to be saved from sin, though. Today, we will hear more about what that means.

Listen to Others (Younger Students)

- ♦ Choose a volunteer to stand with her back to the rest of the class. Provide a Bible and invite another student to read three Bible book names from the table of contents or a verse from the Psalms. The volunteer should guess whose voice she heard. Play three rounds and then choose a new volunteer to guess voices.
- ♦ Think of all the voices you hear each day. They each may be telling you to think and do certain things. Today's Bible story tells us whose voice matters most of all.

Inverse Simon Says (Younger Students)

- ◆ Give commands to the class. Start some commands with the phrase “Simon says” and some without. However, in this version of the game, students will obey when the commands are issued plainly, not when they are preceded by “Simon says.” Each time a player fails to obey when he should, or obeys when he should not, he is out. Play until only one student remains.
- ◆ That game was backward from how we usually play. Instead of obeying Simon, we had to resist what Simon told us. In our story today, we will learn about a time Peter, an apostle of Jesus, was listening to people who pressured him to sin instead of resisting them.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Heart Grid (Older Students)

- ◆ Before class, place nine sheets of red construction paper in a three-by-three grid. You may need to use tape to hold the sheets in place. Draw a heart that touches each sheet in at least one place, except the middle sheet. Then, flip the sheets over and write a few words from the key passage on each sheet. Mix up the sheets and, during class, invite students to put the sheets in the correct order. Then, flip them over to reveal the heart shape.
- ◆ Paul wrote these words to the Galatian believers. Paul said that his life was crucified with Christ. In a way, Paul died to his old way of living. He turned away from living for himself and lived for Jesus. Part of living for Jesus is loving the way Jesus loves. We love others because God loved us.

Key Passage Echo (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Teach students motions for key phrases of Galatians 2:20 and practice them several times. Display the key passage poster or write the verse on the board. Divide the passage into six sections. Then, form two groups. Group A will say the first section with the motions, and group B will echo them. Repeat with the other sections. Read and echo the entire passage again with group B starting and group A echoing.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why does God want us to obey Him?

A: Obedience is our response to God's love for us.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Paul Confronts Peter | Galatians 2:11–21

The Apostle Paul worked hard to share the good news with people everywhere he went. He told both Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) about Jesus. Paul also wanted to make sure that people did not believe things that were not true.

To help them know what is true, Paul wrote a letter to the believers at the church of Galatia (guh LAY shuh). Galatia was a part of the Roman Empire and is in the modern day country of Turkey. The Christians there were mostly Gentiles. In his letter, Paul told the believers about Peter's poor choice.

Peter was a follower of Jesus and one of Jesus' twelve disciples. Peter was also a Jew. He grew up being taught that God only cared about Jews, not the Gentiles. Jews believed Gentiles didn't live the right way to please God, so they refused to be around them at all. Peter knew that God accepted Gentiles and Jews, and he ate meals with the Gentile believers. But when the Jewish believers were around, Peter did not eat with the Gentiles. He pretended to believe that Gentiles were supposed to follow certain Jewish rules, even though that was not true.

Paul wrote that Peter was wrong to do that. Peter let people, instead of God, push him toward acting a certain way. And when Peter did what was wrong, other people started doing what was wrong too.

Paul wrote that we are saved through faith in Jesus alone. He explained that Peter was not showing that he believed this. Paul met with Peter and said in front of everyone there that God does not accept people because they follow His law or obey certain rules. So, why would Peter want the Gentiles to obey all the Jewish rules? God accepts both Jews and Gentiles who have faith in Jesus.

The law showed Paul that he needed Jesus to save him from sin. Because of Jesus, Paul and Peter and every other believer can choose to live for God.

Paul wrote to the believers, "Now my old way of living is dead—as if I too were crucified with Jesus. Jesus gave me new life." Faith in Jesus means saying no to sin. It means trusting in Jesus alone for forgiveness and eternal life. Faith means remembering God's grace and kindness toward sinners. "If we could be saved by obeying the law," said Paul, "Jesus did not need to die."

JESUS CONNECTION



Peter was wrong to separate himself from the Gentiles. The gospel is for everyone, and we should show love to everyone. Paul reminded Peter that only Jesus can save people from sin. God accepts people who have faith in Jesus, not people who try to earn salvation on their own.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

TRUTHFULNESS – Choosing not to lie or deceive others.

Living LifeWise

God's Word is true, so we should speak and live out what the Bible teaches.

Character Connection

Show the optical illusion of the young woman/old woman face. Which do the students see first? Help them see both faces if possible.

This is a really cool illusion, isn't it? We like how one picture shows two different faces, depending on how you look at it. Of course, that's fine with an illusion, but in real life, living two different ways, depending on

who you're with, can be a big problem. Because when we say one thing, but do another (or do it some of the time, with certain people), it makes us a liar.

Peter had this problem, and Paul challenged him on it. Either God's Word is true all the time, or it isn't. But it can't be both ways. And when we have to choose, like Peter did, we need to choose God's Word and God's ways. What He says is always true, and He will help us live His way all the time, even when someone else is watching.

Sometimes we change how we act or pretend something to impress someone else. How can you speak and live truthfully in these situations:

- ◆ A friend complains that the new math lesson was hard, but it wasn't for you.
 - ◆ Some students on the bus ask if you agree that a new movie is good (or bad), but you don't agree.
 - ◆ A classmate tells you to stop sitting or playing with another classmate because she's mad at him.
-

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ The book of Galatians comes right before which book in the Bible?
Ephesians
- ◆ What government controlled the area of Galatia?
The Roman Empire
- ◆ What current country is Galatia located in?
Turkey
- ◆ What did Peter grow up believing?
God only accepted Jews
- ◆ How did the Jews treat the Gentiles?
They refused to be around them
- ◆ Peter felt pressure to do certain things when he was around what group of people?
Jews
- ◆ What was Peter wrong to avoid?
Eating with the Gentiles
- ◆ Who told Peter he was wrong to do this?
Paul
- ◆ Can good deeds and obedience save a person from sin?
No
- ◆ What saves people from sin?
Faith in Jesus Christ
- ◆ What happens to our old life when we trust in Jesus?
Our old life is crucified and replaced by new life in Christ
- ◆ Why does God want us to obey Him?
Obedience is our response to God's love for us.

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

All Aboard! (Older Students)

- ◆ Form groups of six to eight students. Give each group an outdoor blanket or tarp that they will spread out and stand on. Challenge teams to work together to turn over the tarp without any team members stepping onto the floor. Give a five-minute time limit. Increase the challenge by assigning more students to one blanket or reducing the time limit.
- ◆ Good job! What was hard about this game? What was easy? [Allow responses.] Our Bible story today reminds us that God saves all people—Jews and Gentiles. You worked really hard to accomplish the task of flipping the blanket over. But no matter how hard you work, no one can save himself—not by following certain rules or avoiding certain foods. Paul wrote that we are saved through faith in Jesus alone. Because God loves and welcomes all people, we—in Jesus—can love and welcome all people too.

Follow the Rules (Older Students)

- ◆ Play a game like Red Light, Green Light, but add in many more rules. Write the rules on the board or a powerpoint slide ahead of time. Make it clear to the students that the only way to win is to reach the far side of the room without breaking any rules. Each time a student is caught breaking a rule, he must return to the starting point. If your group is growing frustrated with the rules, revert to the classic rules.
- ◆ Suggested Rules:
 - ◇ They may only move when you say “green light.”
 - ◇ They must stop when you say “red light.”
 - ◇ They must always begin moving with their left foot.
 - ◇ They cannot take more than three steps forward during a single “green light.”
 - ◇ On every fourth step, they must take one step back.
 - ◇ They must stand on one foot when you say “pink light.”
 - ◇ They must say a passphrase to cross the midpoint of the room: “Peter’s preference to postpone pigging out with people perplexed Paul.”
- ◆ The rules in that game were complicated and nearly impossible to obey perfectly. Each rule made it harder for you to reach the far side of the room. In a similar way, the Law was impossible to obey perfectly. On our own, we could never reach God. That is why God came to us. Jesus obeyed God’s law perfectly and died for our sin. When we trust in Him, our sin is forgiven, and we get new life through Him. Paul wrote that we are saved through faith in Jesus alone.

True or False (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Explain that you will read a sentence about the Bible story. If students think the sentence is true, they should clap. If they think it is false, they should boo. For each false sentence, give the correct answer.
 - ◇ The book of Galatians is a letter written by Peter. (False; Paul)
 - ◇ Galatia was part of the Roman Empire. (True)
 - ◇ Galatia is located in modern-day Italy. (False; Turkey.)
 - ◇ Peter grew up believing that God accepted everyone. (False; that God only accepted Jews)
 - ◇ The Jews refused to be around Gentiles. (True)

- ✧ Peter felt no pressure to do certain things when he was around the Jews. (*False; he felt pressure*)
- ✧ Paul told Peter that he was wrong to avoid eating with the Gentiles. (*True*)
- ✧ Peter pretended to believe that Gentiles were supposed to follow certain Jewish rules. (*True*)
- ✧ A person is made right with God by obeying the law. (*False; by faith in Jesus alone*)
- ✧ Paul said that Jesus gave him new life. (*True*)
- ✧ If we could be saved by obeying the law, Jesus still needed to die. (*False; Jesus wouldn't have had to die if we could be saved through the law*)
- ✧ The gospel is for everyone, and we should show love to everyone. (*True*)

What's Different? (Older and Younger Students)

- ✧ Arrange an assortment of items and toys on a tray or table, and cover them with a large cloth or sheet. Challenge the class to observe the items closely for a set amount of time. When the timer rings, cover them again. Making sure the class cannot see which item or items you choose, remove or rearrange some items in the set. Reveal the set again, and challenge the students to guess what is different.
- ✧ The differences between the first reveal and the second reveal were small and hard to spot. In our story, Peter treated Gentiles differently, as though they needed to do something extra to be saved. We do not obey God to be saved because we cannot obey God perfectly. Paul wrote that we are saved through faith in Jesus alone, not by obeying God. Why does God want us to obey Him? Obedience is our response to God's love for us.

Weave Welcome Mats (Younger Students)

- ✧ Before the session, cut long 1-inch strips from different colored sheets of construction paper. Provide each student with a piece of construction paper and scissors. Assist students in following the instructions:
 - ✧ Fold the paper in half lengthwise (like a hot dog bun).
 - ✧ From the fold, cut lines about 1 inch apart. Stop cutting about 1 inch from the edge of the paper.
 - ✧ Open the paper. Weave the paper strips over and under each cut.
 - ✧ Continue weaving, alternating colors if you like, until the paper is full. Trim any excess from the strips.
 - ✧ When students finish weaving, supply markers and instruct students to write *Welcome* on their mats. Encourage them to display the mats at home as a reminder that God welcomes all people into His family.
- ✧ Paul wrote that we are saved through faith in Jesus alone. We don't have to wonder if we—or someone else—has what it takes to be saved. Jesus did all the work required for our salvation by living the perfect life and dying the death we deserve on the cross. Because God loves and welcomes all people, we—in Jesus—can love and welcome all people, too.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ✧ Different Than (Older Students)
- ✧ Better Together (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, we trust that salvation comes through faith alone. Thank You for loving us and welcoming us into Your family through Jesus. Help us to love and welcome others too. Amen.

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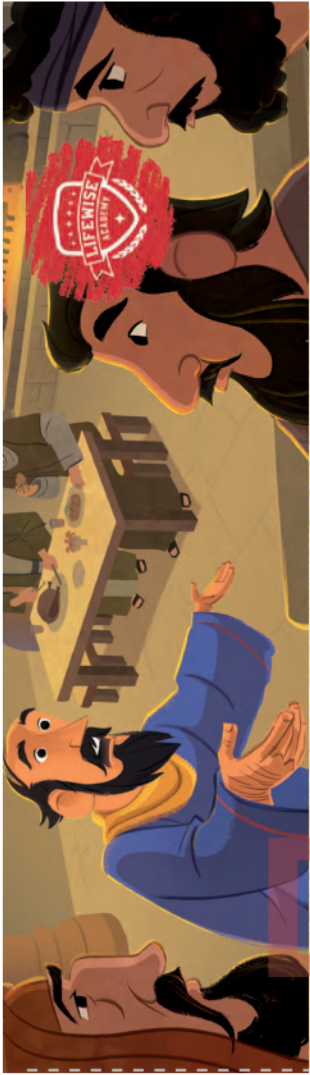
- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What does it mean to be justified? Are people justified by faith or works?
- Why is it good news that we are justified by faith rather than by works?
- If we aren't justified by works, why does God want us to obey Him?



PAUL CONFRONTED PETER

GALATIANS 2:11-21

MAIN POINT: PAUL WROTE THAT WE ARE SAVED THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS ALONE.

To help them know what is true, Paul wrote a letter to the believers at the church of Galatia (guh LAY shuh). The Christians there were mostly Gentiles. In his letter, Paul told the believers about Peter's poor choice.

Peter was a follower of Jesus. He knew that God accepted Gentiles and Jews, and he ate meals with the Gentile believers. But when the Jewish believers were around, Peter did not eat with the Gentiles. He pretended to believe that Gentiles were supposed to follow certain Jewish rules, even though that was not true.

Paul wrote that Peter was wrong to do that. Paul wrote that we are saved through faith in Jesus alone.

Paul met with Peter and said in front of everyone there that God does not accept people because they follow His law or obey certain rules. God accepts both Jews and Gentiles who have faith in Jesus.

The law showed Paul that he needed Jesus to save him from sin. Because of Jesus, Paul and Peter and every other believer can choose to live for God.

"If we could be saved by obeying the law," said Paul, "Jesus did not need to die."

Jesus Connection: Peter was wrong to separate himself from the Gentiles. The gospel is for everyone, and we should show love to everyone. Paul reminded Peter that only Jesus can save people from sin. God accepts people who have faith in Jesus, not people who try to earn salvation on their own.

Key Passage: Galatians 2:20 – I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

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DIFFERENT THAN

Circle your preference in each pair. Then, find someone for each pair who chose differently than you.



cat



dog



bike



car



salad



pizza



day



night



piano



guitar

MAZE MATCH

Complete each sentence by following the paths.

1 Peter was wrong to

2

The gospel is for

3

Paul reminded Peter that

4

God accepts people who

everyone.

have faith in Jesus.

separate himself from the Gentiles.

only Jesus can save people from sin.



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BETTER TOGETHER

INSTRUCTIONS: Match the items on the left with the items on the right that work better together. Not all items will have a match.



KEY PASSAGE:

Galatians 2:20 – I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

LIVING LIFEWISE:

When God forgives our sins, it changes how we live and behave.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Why does God want us to obey Him? Obedience is our response to God's love for us.

BIBLE STORY:

PAUL CONFRONTED PETER

- Paul wrote a letter to the Galatians.
- Paul told about a time Peter would not eat with Gentile believers.
- Peter was wrong to do that.
- Paul wrote that we are saved through faith in Jesus alone.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why was it wrong for Peter to avoid eating with Gentile believers?
- Why is it so important to know that faith in Jesus is the only thing that saves us?
- What happens when we believe we can work for salvation?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Invite a family that your family does not know well to dinner.
- Play an obedience game like "Mother, May I?" or "Simon Says" with your family. Discuss why we obey God.

Paul Confronted Peter

L 103 | TRUTHFULNESS

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PAUL WROTE THAT WE ARE SAVED
THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS ALONE.

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LESSON 104: HOPE

THE CHURCH WAS DIVIDED

1 Corinthians 1:10–31; Acts 18:1–4, 9–11

THE CHURCH WAS DIVIDED



- ◆ 1 Corinthians 1:10–31; Acts 18:1–4, 9–11
- ◆ Big Picture Q&A: Why does God want us to obey Him? Obedience is our response to God's love for us.
- ◆ Key Passage: Galatians 2:20 – I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

JESUS CONNECTION



Paul told believers in the Corinthian church to come together because of the gospel of Jesus. He reminded them that Jesus saves sinners. Because of Jesus and what He has done, believers can humbly come together as one body.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

HOPE – Expecting God will do what is best in every situation.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Paul helped start the church in Corinth, a city in southern Greece, during his second missionary journey. Corinth was known for its wickedness. If any city needed a church, this was it. Paul remained in Corinth for about 18 months and then continued traveling to share the gospel and plant more churches.

Six years later, Paul received word from Chloe, a believer in Corinth, that the church there was struggling. The church was fractured and openly engaged in various sins. Some believers were even denying the resurrection! This news surely troubled Paul, so he sat down to write a letter to the church.

One of the first issues Paul addressed was the church's division. Even if he could help resolve the other issues, a divided church would never be healthy and impact the city the way it needed to. According to Chloe's report, several factions had formed in the church. Some claimed to follow Paul. Others, Apollos. Others, Peter. And some even claimed to follow Jesus, which wasn't as good as it sounded. This group was most likely simply trying to sound more spiritual than the others.

Paul told the Corinthian believers that they should not be divided; they should all be one because of their shared faith in Jesus. Jesus isn't divided, and He alone died on the cross for them. Paul's message was clear: the gospel does not divide believers; it unites them.

We all—students included—are experts in finding ways to divide ourselves. Sin and selfishness divide, but Jesus and the gospel unite. God designed the church to show what true unity among a beautifully diverse people looks like. This week, pray that the message Paul shared with the Corinthian believers takes root in your heart and in the hearts of your students. Pray that God would break down the barriers we create and bring your classes together as brothers and sisters in Christ.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

The whole Bible tells about God's love for us. We have been learning about the early church and how the gospel, the good news about Jesus, began spreading in the world. Paul, a missionary, told people about Jesus and helped start churches. He wrote letters to churches. Last week, we learned about a letter Paul wrote to the Galatian church. Do you remember what Paul told Peter he should not do? (*Avoid eating with Gentiles.*) Why was Peter wrong to do this? (*God accepts all people who place their faith in Him.*) Today's Bible story is about a letter Paul wrote to the church at Corinth. This was a church that was divided instead of united in Christ.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Triple Threat (Older Students)

- ◆ Form teams of three students. Read the following sets of three things. Each team will work together to solve the riddles by identifying what the three things have in common. Feel free to use the following riddles or create your own.
 - ◆ Apples, bananas, peaches (*all fruit*)
 - ◆ Stop signs, tomatoes, blood (*all red*)
 - ◆ Cities, countries, chickens (*all start with C*)
 - ◆ Top, shop, mop (*all rhyme*)
 - ◆ Cats, dogs, books (*all have tails/tales*)
- ◆ Each set of three things had something that united them. Your job was to figure out what that was! We don't have to figure out what unites Christians. God has revealed it to us through His Word. Paul wrote that Christians are joined together by faith in Jesus. That means that even when we disagree on some things, we can remain united and work together for the most important thing: spreading the truth of the gospel.

Board the Bus (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Create two parallel lines a few feet apart on the floor using ropes or masking tape. Instruct the class to stand around the lines. Explain that you will say a word pair. Students who prefer the first word should "board the bus" by standing on the first line. To choose the second word, they will "board the bus" by standing on the second line. You may allow volunteers to explain their choices before resetting for another round. [Suggested word pairs: *summer/winter, dogs/cats, pizza/sandwiches, yellow/blue, breakfast/dinner, showers/baths, basketball/baseball, video games/board games and so on.*]
- ◆ If you prefer summer, do you think you can get along with people who prefer winter? Can people who prefer pizza get along with people who prefer sandwiches? Today's Bible story is about some believers in the church who let their differences divide them. Paul wrote a letter to tell them to come together because of the most important thing: their faith in Jesus.

Puzzle Time (Younger Students)

- ◆ Empty the contents of an age-appropriate puzzle onto the floor for the students to see. Allow them to sort through the pieces and try to guess what the puzzle is a picture of without looking at the box or completing the puzzle. Then, allow them to work together to complete the puzzle.

- ◆ In a puzzle, each piece is different from the other pieces, but when they come together, they make one beautiful picture. Today, we will hear about a church that was not coming together but was dividing themselves based on their differences.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Shoulder to Shoulder (Older Students)

- ◆ Direct the class to line up in a single row, shoulder to shoulder. Say the first word of the key passage, and then point to each student in succession to say the next word, one at a time. When they complete the verse, start again. You may display the key passage poster if needed.

Key Passage Puzzle (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before the session, print a copy of the key passage poster and cut it into several pieces. If your group is large, prepare multiple sets and form several groups. Display the key passage poster and read it aloud together. Distribute the puzzle(s) and challenge the class or groups to assemble it. When they finish, lead everyone to say the key passage together again.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why does God want us to obey Him?

A: Obedience is our response to God's love for us.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

The Church Was Divided | 1 Corinthians 1:10–31; Acts 18:1–4, 9–11

The city of Corinth, in Greece, was known for its great sinfulness, so what better place to start a church?

Paul shared the gospel with both Jews and Greeks in Corinth. Some Jews believed, including a Jewish man named Aquila (uh KWIL uh) and his wife, Priscilla. Paul stayed with them and worked at their tent-making business. Aquila and Priscilla joined Paul in sharing the gospel. Although most Jews rejected the good news of Jesus, many Greeks believed.

God encouraged Paul by speaking to him in a vision one night. The Lord said, "Don't be afraid, but keep on speaking and don't be silent. For I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to hurt you, because I have many people in this city."

So, Paul started the Corinthian church and stayed there for about a year and a half. Then, he traveled on to keep preaching the good news of Jesus.

Six years later, Paul received word from Chloe, a believer in Corinth, that the church there was struggling. These believers were arguing and taking one another to court, and they had questions about their faith. **So, Paul wrote a letter to help the church solve its problems.**

The believers in Corinth were divided. One group bragged about following Paul. Another group chose Apollos. A third group followed Peter. And a fourth said they followed Jesus. **Paul said that the believers**

should not be divided; they should all agree on what they believe. Paul wrote that Christians are joined together by faith in Jesus.

“Is Jesus divided?” Paul asked. “Was it Paul who died on the cross for you? Or were you baptized in Paul’s name?” **Of course not! Jesus died on the cross, and the believers were baptized in Jesus’ name. They should come together because of the gospel. Believers all agree that Jesus is Lord, so Paul said they should get along and love one another.**

Paul explained that the good news about Jesus seems foolish to those who are lost—those who do not believe in Jesus. But to those who believe, the cross is God’s power. Many people think they know a lot, but what they know is worldly wisdom. They do not know God, and to them, the good news about Jesus is foolish.

Paul encouraged his friends in Corinth to think about the fact that God chose them to be in His family. God did not choose anyone because of that person’s wisdom or power or family. Paul said that God saves people who trust in Jesus. No one can earn salvation, so no one can brag about being saved. If the Corinthian believers wanted something to be proud of, they could be proud of Jesus and what He has done.



JESUS CONNECTION

Paul told believers in the Corinthian church to come together because of the gospel of Jesus. He reminded them that Jesus saves sinners. Because of Jesus and what He has done, believers can humbly come together as one body.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

HOPE – Expecting God will do what is best in every situation.

Living LifeWise

God restores our relationship with Him through Jesus, so we have hope that He can restore our relationships with others.

Character Connection

Because of sin, conflict is part of our world. Humans were in conflict with God, but He sent Jesus to die for our sins so we didn’t have to be separated from Him anymore. And if He can fix that big of a separation, it gives us hope that He can help us handle any conflict we have ... with anyone.

Paul’s friends at Corinth were having really big disagreements, and it hurt their church. We won’t always agree with other people, but we can decide how to disagree. We can either cross our arms, dig in our heels and refuse to work through it, or we can ask God to restore the relationship and try to resolve the problem His way.

When we have conflicts, we can trust Him to provide everything we need. That’s why we have hope. We can ask Him to help us respond humbly to those we disagree with. We can ask God to help us respond His way by showing others the same grace and kindness God has shown to us, even when we disagree.

Do you think these situations show hope in conflict? Why or why not?

- ◆ My friend embarrassed me in front of the whole class, so there is no way I can go back to school without everyone laughing at me again.
- ◆ The bus driver said I am too loud and won't let me sit where I want anymore, so I will apologize and try to keep my voice level down.
- ◆ My best friend is really mad at me and won't answer my calls or texts, so I'm just going to find a new best friend.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ Which book of the Bible comes right before 1 Corinthians?
Romans
- ◆ What government controlled the city of Corinth?
The Roman Empire
- ◆ What modern-day country is Corinth in?
Greece
- ◆ How long did Paul stay in Corinth on his third missionary journey?
1½ years, Acts 18:9
- ◆ Whom did Paul work with in the tent-making business?
Aquila and Priscilla, Acts 18:2-3
- ◆ Why did God encourage Paul to keep sharing the gospel in Corinth?
Many people in Corinth would believe Paul's message, Acts 18:10
- ◆ What was the major problem for the church in Corinth?
Division, disunity, rivalry among believers, 1 Cor. 1:10-11
- ◆ Paul encouraged the church not to be proud or boastful about themselves, but instead to boast about what?
The gospel, 1 Cor. 1:30-31

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

I Love People ... (Older Students)

- ◆ Guide the class to sit or stand in a circle. Choose a student to begin the game by saying, "I love people who _____," and choosing a trait to fill in the blank. The trait must include and unite everyone in the classroom. Have students go around the circle, saying the traits that were listed before them and adding one of their own. [Examples include: created by God, are from Seth's family line, live on Earth, etc.] See if students can get all the way around the circle without forgetting the traits.
- ◆ So many times, we focus on how others are different and decide whether or not to like or include someone based on that. Today, we focused on things that unite us.

Multiple Choice Trivia (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before the session, label three papers A, B and C and hang them in different areas of the room. For younger students, use only two options. Ask students to identify which testament today's story is in (*New Testament*) and which Bible division (*Paul's letters*).
- ◆ Explain that you will read a question and three possible answers. After you read all three answers, students will move to the letter they think is the correct answer. Then, read the question and the correct answer together. The class should return to the center of the room before each question.

1. What was the city of Corinth known for?

- Beautiful art
- Great sin
- A strong army

2. What country is the city of Corinth located in?

- Greece
- Macedonia
- Italy

3. What did God tell Paul about Corinth in a vision?

- No one would hurt Paul.
- There were many people who would believe the gospel.
- He would be with Paul.

4. How long did Paul stay in Corinth while establishing the church?

- 2 weeks
- 6 months
- 1½ years

5. Who told Paul there were problems in the Corinthian church?

- Chloe
- Apollos
- Silas

6. What was the problem at the church in Corinth?

- They forgot who Jesus is.
- They worshiped idols.
- They were divided (1 Cor. 1:11).

7. What did Paul say should unite believers?

- Food
- The gospel (1 Cor. 1:13, 17)
- Sports

8. God chose believers to be part of His what?

- Family (John 1:12)
- Club
- Organization

9. Why does God want us to obey Him?

- We must obey to earn God's love.
- *Obedience is our response to God's love for us.*
- God does not care if we obey Him or not.

Partner Challenge (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Guide students to find a partner. Call two pairs to the front of the room. Partners should sanitize their hands before competing. Each pair should stand side by side and tuck one arm behind their backs. Give each pair a wrapped candy or snack bar (or a shoe with laces for a non-food item). When you say "go," partners should work together using one hand each to remove the wrapper (or tie the shoe). The first pair to finish wins. You may choose to time pairs and see who worked the fastest. Play again with new pairs. After each round, allow the students who competed to divide their snack and share it.
- ♦ Great job working together. Paul wrote that Christians are joined together by faith in Jesus. We probably won't agree on everything, but we should all agree about Jesus. Jesus died on the cross to save sinners and bring people together as one family for His glory.

Three-Legged Race (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Help the students pair off. Give each pair a bandanna and explain that they will stand side by side and tie their middle legs together with the bandanna. Give them a few minutes to practice getting used to moving while tied together. Then, hold a series of races or obstacle courses to see which team can walk the fastest as a "three-legged person."
- ♦ It can be hard to cooperate with others. You cannot control what another person will do, but you must work together and communicate with each other to succeed. In a similar way, the church is made up of many different people. We don't always agree, but we can focus on the gospel that unites us in Jesus. Paul wrote that Christians are joined together by faith in Jesus.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ♦ Puzzle Pie (Older Students)
- ♦ Half and Half (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord, thank You for the love You showed us at the cross. We know that on our own we cannot obey You. Help us surrender to Your will. Fill our hearts and give us the power of the Holy Spirit to be united together for the sake of the gospel. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why is it important for Christians to be united?
- Whom should Christians follow? Why?

THE CHURCH WAS DIVIDED

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10–31; ACTS 18:1–4, 9–11

MAIN POINT: PAUL WROTE THAT CHRISTIANS ARE JOINED TOGETHER BY FAITH IN JESUS.

Paul started the Corinthian church and stayed there for about a year and a half. Then, he traveled on to keep preaching the good news of Jesus.

Six years later, Paul heard that the church in Corinth was struggling. So, Paul wrote a letter to help the church solve its problems.

The believers in Corinth were divided. Paul said that the believers should not be divided; they should all agree on what they believe. Paul wrote that Christians are joined together by faith in Jesus.

“Is Jesus divided?” Paul asked. Of course not! Jesus died on the cross, and the believers were baptized in Jesus’ name. They should come together because of the gospel. Believers all agree that Jesus is Lord, so Paul said they should get along and love one another.

Paul encouraged his friends in Corinth to think about the fact that God chose them to be in His family. God did not choose anyone because of that person’s wisdom or power or family.

Paul said that God saves people who trust in Jesus. No one can earn salvation, so no one can brag about being saved. If the Corinthian believers wanted something to be proud of, they could be proud of Jesus and what He has done.

Jesus Connection: Paul told believers in the Corinthian church to come together because of the gospel of Jesus. He reminded them that Jesus saves sinners. Because of Jesus and what He has done, believers can humbly come together as one body.

Key Passage: Galatians 2:20 – *I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

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PUZZLE PIE

Match each loose piece with the spot it belongs in the puzzle.



PAUL WROTE THAT	JOINED TOGETHER	JOINED TOGETHER	BY FAITH IN JESUS.
CHRISTIANS ARE	PAUL WROTE THAT	PAUL WROTE THAT	BY FAITH IN JESUS.
CHRISTIANS ARE	JOINED TOGETHER	JOINED TOGETHER	BY FAITH IN JESUS.
BY FAITH IN JESUS.	PAUL WROTE THAT	CHRISTIANS ARE	CHRISTIANS ARE

GROUP GRID

Divide the grid into four sections, each section containing four squares. Each section must contain each phrase in the main point: Paul wrote that Christians are joined together by faith in Jesus. Phrases may appear out of order. (Hint: We've done the first one for you.)

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I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.



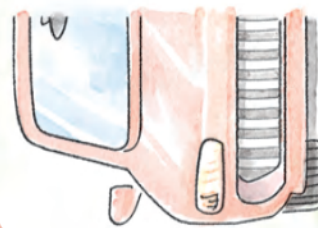
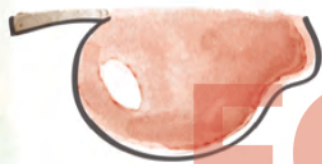
GALATIANS 2:20

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HALF AND HALF

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete each picture by drawing the missing half.



KEY PASSAGE:

Galatians 2:20 – I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Why does God want us to obey Him? Obedience is our response to God's love for us.

BIBLE STORY:

THE CHURCH WAS DIVIDED

- Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthians.
- The Corinthians were fighting about whom to follow.
- Paul wrote that Christians are joined together by faith in Jesus.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why do you think it is important for Christians to be united?
- Whom should Christians follow? Why?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

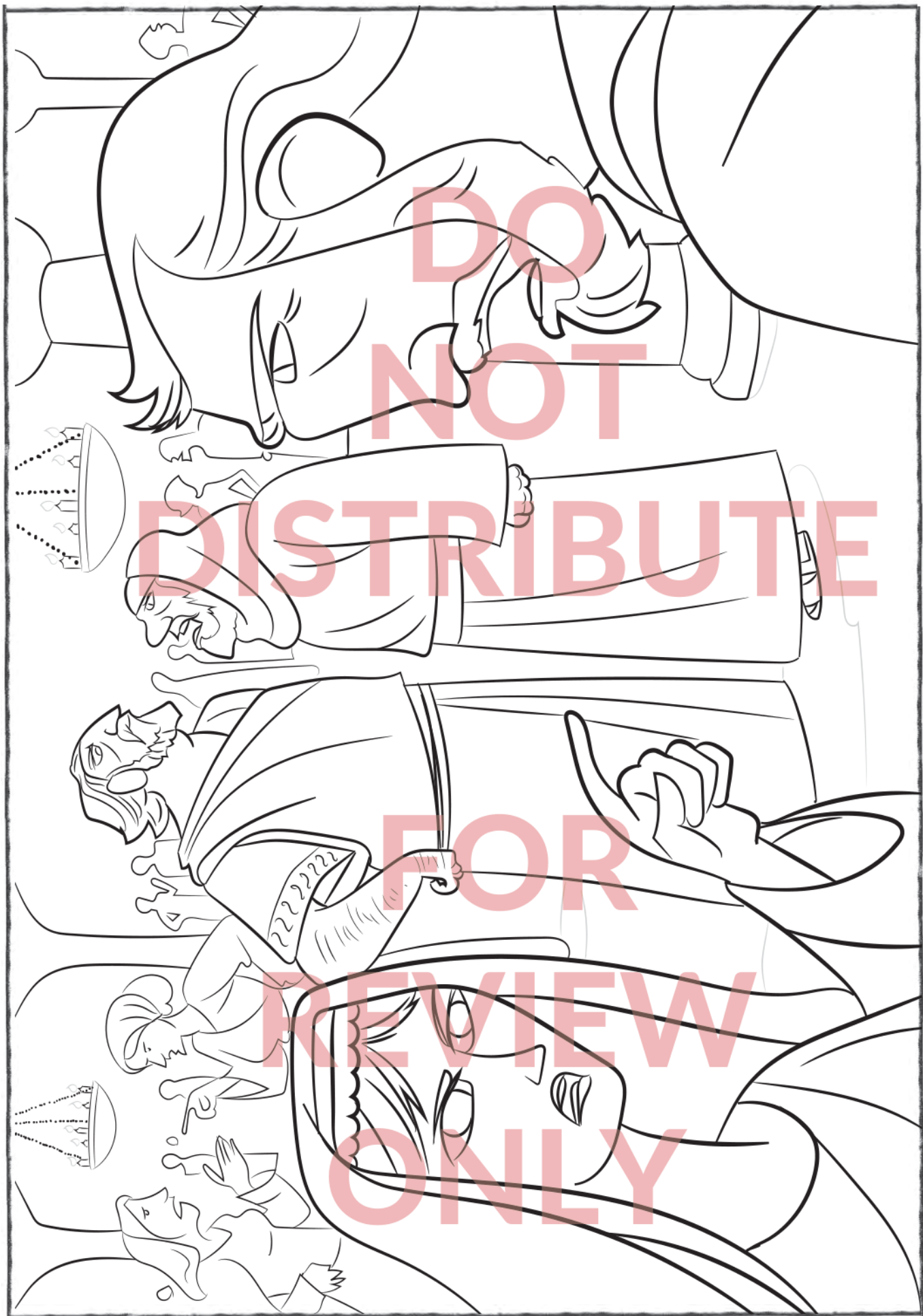
- Cut some objects, like a baseball, an insulated mug or a seashell in half. Show your kids what these objects look like on the inside. Discuss how, despite being cool to look at, each object cannot function when divided. Discuss ways the church benefits from being united by faith in Christ.

The Church Was Divided

L 104 | HOPE

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LESSON 105: MERCY

THE CHURCH SHOWED FAVORITISM

James 2:1–13

THE CHURCH SHOWED FAVORITISM



- ♦ James 2:1–13
- ♦ Big Picture Q&A: Why does God want us to obey Him? Obedience is our response to God's love for us.
- ♦ Key Passage: Galatians 2:20 – I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

JESUS CONNECTION



When believers in the early church treated some people as better than others, James told them they were wrong. He reminded them that Jesus commanded believers to love one another. Because He has shown great mercy to us, we can show mercy to others.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

MERCY – Choosing not to punish someone who deserves to be punished.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

During Jesus' earthly ministry, many Jews struggled to believe that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God. This included James, Jesus' half-brother. But after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus appeared to James, and at last James believed. James later became the leader of the church in Jerusalem—a vital role in the early, growing church.

The early church comprised mostly Jewish believers. That makes sense because of the church's origin in Israel, but also because that was the mission Jesus gave: start with the Jews and spread out from there. James wrote a letter to Jewish believers who were scattered around the region, helping them understand how their new faith in Jesus should frame how they live.

James told his fellow believers that one way they could live out the gospel was by not showing favoritism. James used an example of how a church might show favoritism to a wealthy man over a poor man who came to a meeting.

The natural response might be to treat the wealthy man better, but James told the believers that God does not show favoritism. God has treated all people—rich and poor—the same: generously, with the gospel. God's kindness toward us should cause us to want to treat others with similar love, generosity and equality.

This week's session is a great follow-up to last week's. Some of your students may think that being united is just a matter of getting along with one another and not fighting. But God's heart is for us to be united far more deeply. Help your students see that the gospel should compel them to treat one another in the same way—with the same love, mercy and grace shown to us by Jesus.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

We've been learning about letters written to God's people. Paul wrote to the Galatians telling them how to be saved. What did Paul tell them they could not be saved by doing? (*Following rules.*) What can each person be saved through? (*Faith in Jesus alone.*) Last time, we learned about Paul's letter to the Corinthians. What problem did Paul write to them about? (*Arguing and division in the church.*) Who were some of the leaders the people claimed to follow? (*Paul, Apollos, Peter and Jesus.*) Paul told them their focus should be on what? (*Jesus and the gospel.*) Today, we will learn about another letter to the church. Our story today is called "The Church Showed Favoritism."

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Favorites Game (Older Students)

- ◆ Give each student an index card and a pencil. Instruct students to number their cards 1 to 4 and put their names at the top. Read the following prompts and guide the class to write their answers on their cards: *Your favorite color, Your favorite movie, Your favorite teacher, Your favorite book.* Collect the cards and mix them up. Read one card at a time, challenging students to guess whose card you are reading based on his or her favorites.
- ◆ We all have favorite things, and we all have people we love to spend time with, like our family and closest friends. Today's Bible story will answer the question, "Does God have favorite people?" Let's find out.

Order Up (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Guide the class to line up in order based on different characteristics such as age, alphabetically by first name, height, rainbow order using shirt color or other traits.
- ◆ Although there can be good reasons to line up in a specific order, it's important to remember that no trait can change how valuable a person is to God. Today, we will hear what the Bible says about treating some people with more honor than other people.

My Favorite Things (Younger Students)

- ◆ Write the letters A and B on separate sheets of paper and tape them on opposite walls. For each statement, the class will run to one side of the room or the other based on their favorite things. Students should stay on a given side until a statement requires them to move. Suggestions:
 - ◇ Run to A if your favorite color is green, B if it's not.
 - ◇ Run to B if your favorite food is macaroni and cheese, A if it's not.
 - ◇ Run to A if you like cats as pets, B if you don't.
 - ◇ Run to B if your favorite movie is a cartoon, A if it isn't.
 - ◆ It's okay to have favorite foods, colors or movies. However, today we will learn why it is not okay to play favorites with people. God wants us to treat everyone with love and respect, no matter what.
-

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Build a Church (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ This game is similar to Hangman. Draw four lines to form a square (the church building). Draw two lines to form a triangle (the roof). Draw two lines on the roof to form a cross. One at a time, point to a student to say one word of the key passage, and draw a part of the church for each correct response. For incorrect responses, erase a line. Challenge the class to see how many “churches” they can build in three minutes. Have a volunteer draw the churches while you point to children to keep up the pace of the game. For younger students, have the key passage written on the board with some words left out.

Key Passage Hunt and Order (Younger Students)

- ◆ Write each word or phrase of the key passage on a separate index card. Hide the cards around the room and encourage the class to find them. Once students have found all the cards, instruct them to place them in order and then read the verse together. With large classes, color code the cards and have them get into groups based on color to order the passage.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why does God want us to obey Him?

A: Obedience is our response to God's love for us.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

The Church Showed Favoritism | James 2:1–13

The early church had many leaders. They taught other believers, encouraged them to keep following Jesus and corrected them when they sinned. One of these leaders was Jesus' half-brother James, the son of Mary and Joseph.

James was a leader in the Jerusalem church. He wrote a letter to the Jewish believers who had moved to many different places. He told them the way believers should live. People who trust Jesus show that they really believe in Him by doing good and right things.

One important right thing, James taught, is to not show favoritism. That means we should treat everyone the same. No person is more important or less important than any other person.

James said, “Imagine you are meeting together and a man comes in wearing a gold ring and fancy clothes. Then, a poor man in old, dirty clothes comes in, too. Is it right to pay attention to the man in fancy clothes and give him a chair to sit in but say to the poor man ‘Stand over there’ or ‘Sit on the floor’? If you do this, you have treated one man better than the other.”

James said that God does not show favoritism. He does not treat rich people better than poor people, nor does He treat poor people better than rich people. God has a place in Heaven for everyone who loves Him.

God taught us His law: Love your neighbor as yourself. Anyone who treats one person better than another person breaks God's law. And even one sin is a big deal because God is holy. As James wrote, "Whoever keeps the entire law, but disobeys at one point, is guilty of breaking it all."

James told the believers to show mercy to others because they had been shown mercy. They were sinners, but God forgave their sins through His Son, Jesus. James insisted, "Mercy triumphs over judgment."

JESUS CONNECTION



When believers in the early church treated some people as better than others, James told them they were wrong. He reminded them that Jesus commanded believers to love one another. Because He has shown great mercy to us, we can show mercy to others.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3-4 MIN)

MERCY – Choosing not to punish someone who deserves to be punished.

Living LifeWise

God shows mercy to us, so we can respond to others with mercy instead of judgment.

Character Connection (Older Students)

God's Law requires us to "love your neighbor as yourself." Both Jesus (in His parable) and James, in his letter, tell us that loving our neighbor always involves showing mercy. In both cases, mercy is the opposite of passing judgment on someone.

To judge someone means to decide they deserve some kind of punishment. A courtroom judge looks at the evidence and the law and declares what punishment the guilty person will face for his or her crimes. But in real life, we often judge people simply based on how they look. We decide they deserve not to be treated as well as someone else because of something we see or think we see. And this, James says (and Jesus too), is not mercy.

Judgment looks at someone's clothes or accomplishments or grades or popularity or video game scores and says either, "Wow! I can tell this person is really something so I'll treat them the best way I know how!" or "Obviously, this person is awkward and uncool, so I can treat them less well." That's what the believers were doing, and God said it was not okay.

Mercy is the opposite of punishing someone. It's treating them with kindness, no matter what (we think) they deserve. It's how God treats us because of Jesus, so He wants us to pass on that mercy to others. Our natural habit will always be to judge and punish based on appearances, but God's Spirit will help us see people as God does and treat them as mercifully as He has treated us.

Choose 1-2 scenarios to prompt discussion about mercy and favoritism.

- ◆ Which is better to celebrate? The fastest runner who won the race again, or her teammate who ran her best time ever but came in seventh? Why do you think so?

- ◆ How could you show mercy to someone we might be more likely to judge?
- ◆ What are some things we sometimes judge others based on? [*How they dress, how rich they seem, how good they are at something, etc.*] Why are outward appearances not a good way to determine how someone should be treated?

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ Whom was James the half-brother of?
Jesus
- ◆ James was a leader in what church?
Jerusalem
- ◆ How did James communicate with believers far away?
He wrote a letter
- ◆ Whom were some churches treating differently?
The rich and poor, James 2:1-4
- ◆ What did James tell the believers not to do?
Show favoritism, James 2:1
- ◆ What is favoritism?
"Giving special treatment to a person or group"
- ◆ What does God's law say about how we treat others?
Love your neighbor as yourself, James 2:8
- ◆ How did God show us mercy?
He forgave our sins through His Son, Jesus

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Bible Trivia War (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Write the numbers 1-10 on separate index cards. Make two sets. Mix up the cards and place them face-down on the table. Invite students to take turns flipping over two cards. If the numbers match, read the corresponding review question. For a correct answer, the player gets the number of points on the card. If he answers incorrectly, he should turn the cards facedown. Play passes to the next student.

People Collage (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Provide child-friendly magazines and encourage the class to find and cut out pictures of people. Students should use glue sticks to paste the pictures to a large sheet of paper. All the students will contribute to a single collage. Allow them to decorate the collage with drawings of hearts. As they work, explain that every person is valuable to God.
- ◆ Why would someone show favoritism to a person who is rich? [*Allow students to respond.*] We might be tempted to show favoritism to people who are rich because we hope that person will give us some money. We might be tempted to treat a person who is poor as less important because we think that person has nothing to give us. The Bible says that God does not show favoritism. James calls us to treat people with mercy because Jesus shows us mercy. We have

nothing to offer Jesus but empty hands of faith. He gives salvation as a free gift to anyone who puts their trust in Him.

Favoritism Scenarios (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Read the given scenarios to the class and lead them to discuss how each might make them feel. Talk about ways to respond with obedience to God in each situation. Suggested situations:
 - ◇ Your teacher catches you and another student talking. He tells the other student to be quiet, but makes you sit out during recess as punishment.
 - ◇ A new student arrives at school. Her clothing looks ragged, and you think she smells a little funny. She asks to sit next to you at lunch.
 - ◇ Your best friend starts spending more time with another student in your class after that student gave your best friend a really expensive birthday present.
 - ◇ You feel like you always get in trouble for things that your little brother gets away with.
 - ◇ You win a special prize that means you get to eat lunch with your favorite movie star. You can invite one friend, but you have two friends who each want to go.
 - ◇ Your dad is the coach of your sports team, and he always lets you pick what position you want to play.
- ◆ Some of those situations would be really hard to go through. It can be hard to obey God and not show favoritism, but we know that Jesus gives us new life when we believe in Him. James calls us to treat people with mercy because Jesus shows us mercy.

Captain, Can I? (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Designate a player to be the Captain. The rest of the class are crew members. The captain should stand on one side of the room. Crew members will take turns asking, "Captain, can I take [number] steps forward?" For example, three steps or four baby steps. The captain will answer, "Yes, you can," or "No, you cannot." The captain decides who can move forward and who cannot. Students may find the captain's decisions unfair. The first player to cross the room wins.
- ◆ Did the captain in our game show favoritism? Did he allow everyone to move? When we show favoritism, we sin by treating people as if God did not create everyone equal. We can treat everyone as important because God loves everyone. In our Bible story today, we learned that God calls us to treat people with mercy because Jesus shows us mercy.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ Code Word (Older Students)
- ◆ Key Word Crossing (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for showing mercy to all people. It is so hard for us to treat everyone with love and respect because we still live in a broken world. Help us to obey You out of love. Make our lives into wonderful examples of Your power to change people. Amen.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why is it unloving to show favoritism?
- When is it easy to show favoritism?
- Whom can you show more of Jesus' love to this week?



THE CHURCH SHOWED FAVORITISM

JAMES 2:1-13

MAIN POINT: JAMES CALLS US TO TREAT PEOPLE WITH MERCY BECAUSE JESUS SHOWS US MERCY.

James was a leader in the Jerusalem church. He wrote a letter to the Jewish believers who had moved to many different places. He told them the way believers should live. People who trust Jesus show that they really believe in Him by doing good and right things.

One important right thing, James taught, is to not show favoritism. That means we should treat everyone the same. No person is more important or less important than any other person.

James said, "Imagine you are meeting together and a man comes in wearing a gold ring and fancy clothes. Then, a poor man in old, dirty clothes comes in, too. Is it right to pay attention to the man in fancy clothes and give him a chair to sit in, but say to the poor man 'Stand over there,' or 'Sit on the floor'? If you do this, you have treated one man better than the other."

James said that God does not show favoritism.

God taught us His law: Love your neighbor as yourself. Anyone who treats one person better than another person breaks God's law.

James told the believers to show mercy to others because they had been shown mercy. They were sinners, but God forgave their sins through His Son, Jesus.

Jesus Connection: When believers in the early church treated some people as better than others, James told them they were wrong. He reminded them that Jesus commanded believers to love one another. Because He has shown great mercy to us, we can show mercy to others.











Key Passage: Galatians 2:20 – I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

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CODE WORD

Write the first letter of each picture in the box above it. Then, circle the correct definition for the code word.

									
---	---	---	---	---	--	---	---	---	---

- a. feeling of liking for everyone equally
- b. not favoring one side over another
- c. giving special treatment to a person or group

ALL THE SAME

Find and circle the shadow that matches the people from the Bible story.



Write today's main point here: _____

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KEY WORD CROSSING

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the clues to complete the crossword puzzle.

Across

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

Down

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

Word bank

POOR

BROTHERS

LOVE

RICH

SIT

FAVORITES

SISTERS

STAND

CHURCH

1. boys in your family with the same father or mother

2. to have very little money or own very few things

3. the things you like most

4. a strong feeling of affection and kindness toward others

5. to have a lot of money or very many things

6. the group of people who love Jesus and obey Him

7. to place your backside on a chair or the ground

8. girls in your family with the same father or mother

9. to be upright on your feet

THE CHURCH SHOWED FAVORITISM

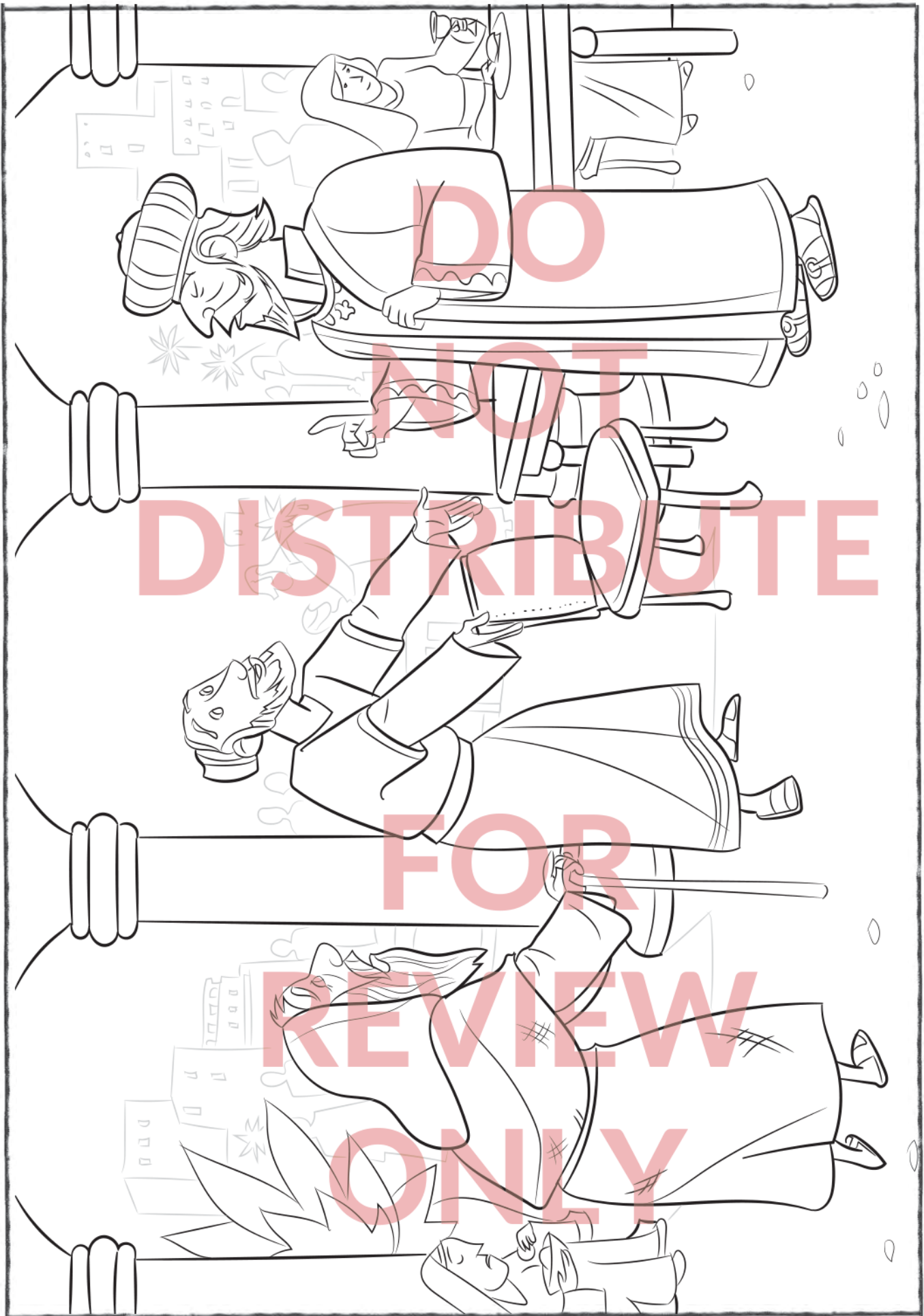
James wrote a letter to believers.

Believers were treating some people better than others.

James calls us to treat people with mercy because Jesus shows us mercy.

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JAMES CALLS US TO TREAT PEOPLE WITH
MERCY BECAUSE JESUS SHOWS US MERCY.

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L 105 The Church Showed Favoritism | MERCY

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People Cards

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.
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LESSON 106: LOVE

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

1 John 1:5–7, 3:10–18

LOVE ONE ANOTHER



- ♦ 1 John 1:5–7, 3:10–18
- ♦ Big Picture Q&A: Why does God want us to obey Him? Obedience is our response to God's love for us.
- ♦ Key Passage: Galatians 2:20 – I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

JESUS CONNECTION



John wrote a letter to teach believers in the church about the importance of showing love. Love is more than feelings or words—it is an action. Jesus showed God's love for us when He died on the cross to rescue people from sin.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

LOVE – Choosing to support and care for others whether or not they deserve it.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The Apostle John had been one of Jesus' closest friends. Along with Peter and James, John was part of the innermost core of Jesus' disciples. John even referred to himself in his Gospel as "the one whom Jesus loved." It is not surprising that 50 years after Jesus returned to Heaven, John wrote a letter to help believers understand who Jesus is. At the center of John's message was one key theme: love.

John wrote that God is love, and if believers truly love God, then we will love one another. Our love for one another should be so deep that we are willing to lay down our lives for one another just as Jesus did for us. It is this deep, genuine love that will cause the world to understand the reality of the gospel.

Love is misunderstood and distorted in our culture today, and the students you teach have been impacted by this in some way. Many of your students may see love as just a feeling, as something temporary or as something that has to be earned. This lesson provides you with the perfect opportunity to expose the world's myths about love and remind the class of the truth about God's love.

Remember to be sensitive to the situations students face. Many may feel unloved. Many may have been hurt by those they love. Many may be trying to earn love from others. Be prepared to address these situations. Remind them that Jesus' love for them is unconditional and unending. It is not just a feeling. Jesus' love for us is proven by His death on the cross to rescue them from sin. We can love others because God loved us first.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

We're learning about the commands God gave to the church to help believers live new lives for God's glory. In Galatians, how did Paul say we can be saved from sin? (*Faith in Jesus alone.*) What did Paul encourage the Corinthian believers to focus on instead of arguing and dividing over differences of opinion? (*Jesus and the gospel.*) Why did James tell believers to treat people with mercy instead of showing favoritism? (*Because Jesus shows us all mercy.*) Each of these commands was really from God, because God inspired what they wrote. This week, our story comes from the book of 1 John and is called "Love One Another."

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

What is Love? (Older Students)

- ♦ Write several words and their definition from the dictionary on separate note cards. Be sure to include the word *love*. [Suggested words: *ladder, language, luggage, laugh, listen, look and love.*] Choose a volunteer to come to the front of the room. Give her the note card without letting the class see it. The volunteer will read the definition aloud without saying the word. The player who guesses the word correctly will come up, receive a new note card and read that word's definition. End the game with the word *love*.
- ♦ Today's Bible story is about the word *love*. The Bible says we know what love is because Jesus gave His own life for us. Let's get ready to hear more.

People Charades (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Before the session, write words describing different people on separate index cards. [Examples: *baker, football player, ballet dancer, gardener, race car driver.*] Prepare about eight cards. Invite the class to play a game of charades. Each player will draw a card and perform silent actions for the other players. [Examples: *A baker might act out stirring dough in a bowl, or a football player may mime throwing a ball.*] The first player to guess the person gets a point. Play additional rounds as you have time.
- ♦ Some of those people were more difficult to guess than others. What kinds of actions might you do for the word *Christian*? [Allow students to respond.] Today's Bible story is about how people will know we are Christians.

Showing Love (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Ask the class what love looks like. As the students describe ways they show love to others, list their ideas on a dry erase board, chalkboard or large sheet of paper.
- ♦ Love can look different in different situations. One thing that almost always shows love is putting the needs of another person before your own. Today, we will learn more about the way God commands Christians to love one another.

Whom Do You Love? (Younger Students)

- ♦ Distribute paper and a pencil to each student. Allow the class to share colored pencils. Have students draw pictures of themselves with a person they love. Encourage them to think of creative ways to show that the people in their picture love each other.
- ♦ Some people, like our friends and family, are usually easy to love. Other people can be much harder to love, like a bully at school or a new student at school whom you don't know well. God

calls Christians to love everyone. Today, we will learn more about what this looks like and how we can obey God in this command.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Passage Mix Up (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Write words or phrases of the passage on individual cards and scramble them on the board or floor. Invite one student at a time to place one card in the correct spot by exchanging two cards (the card that was replaced moves to where the correct card originally was). Call up new volunteers to exchange a card until each card is in the correct spot.

Loud, Quiet, Silent (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Practice the key passage normally all the way through. Then, explain to the class that you will be doing it three times, with the motions (if using them), at three different volumes without stopping. The first time, use a very loud voice and do the motions with big movements; the second time, use a quiet voice and smaller, less intense motions; the third time, mouth the words and do tiny motions.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why does God want us to obey Him?

A: Obedience is our response to God's love for us.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Love One Another | 1 John 1:5–7, 3:10–18

As one of Jesus' closest friends, the Apostle John had lived alongside Jesus. He witnessed Jesus' life and teachings. He was there when Jesus was arrested, on trial, and hanging on the cross. John saw the empty tomb. He spent time with Jesus after He rose from the dead and saw Him return to Heaven. **Now, some 50 years later, John was an older man. The city of Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Roman Empire and Jesus' disciples were scattered throughout many countries. Many believers went through persecution because of their faith. And many began to act more like the world than like Jesus.**

John knew who Jesus really was, and he wrote a letter to help believers understand that Jesus was—and is—the Son of God. He taught them that being part of the world and following Jesus are just as different as darkness and light. He reminded the disciples what it looks like to walk in God's light.

John showed that God is love. If believers truly love God, they will also love one another—and that love must be shown in what believers say and do.

John said that people who are God's children live differently than people who are not God's children. Believers do what is right, and they love one another. This is not a new message. Jesus told us to love one another too. John wrote that **others will know we are Christians because we show love to one another.**

John told about Cain and Abel. Why did Cain kill Abel? Cain killed his brother because he did what was evil and his brother did what was good. Cain hated Abel. **John explained that people who do not love others are controlled by the power of sin and death. He said we should not be surprised when the world hates us, because they are controlled by these things. But God has set every believer free from the power of death. He has loved us and has given us life, so we can love one another.**

We know what love is because Jesus showed us. He laid down His life for us. Because of Jesus' power, we can—and should—love like that too. When we have something that our brother needs, we should give it to him. If someone has enough to help but turns away and does nothing, does that person really know God's love?

John said that we must not just talk about loving others. We must love them by our actions and by telling them the truth.



JESUS CONNECTION

John wrote a letter to teach believers in the church about the importance of showing love. Love is more than feelings or words—it is an action. Jesus showed God's love for us when He died on the cross to rescue people from sin.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

LOVE – Choosing to support and care for others whether or not they deserve it.

Living LifeWise

Because God has loved us, we can love others.

Character Connection

Words are important, for sure. We need to say how we feel about the people we love. But if we talk a big game, but don't do anything, our words won't matter. Words alone aren't enough to show love. Love is an action.

God's love is demonstrated in this: when we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). God didn't just tell us how much He loves us (though He did write it all through the Bible); He showed us by how He acted. He sent Jesus. Jesus died and rose again. We can ask Him to help us show love to others, even when it's hard.

I'm going to list some actions, and you tell me to whom these things might demonstrate love. There might be more than one answer.

- ◆ Cleaning the kitchen without being asked.
- ◆ Picking up trash when you see it on the floor.
- ◆ Helping a classmate put away their game during indoor recess.

- ◆ Standing up for another person who's being made fun of.
- ◆ Telling someone else that Jesus loves them and died for them.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ **Who was John?**
A disciple, apostle and close friend of Jesus
- ◆ **What are some of the things John went through with Jesus?**
Jesus' arrest, trial, death, resurrection and ascension
- ◆ **John said that we should not walk in darkness but in what?**
The light, 1 John 1:5-7
- ◆ **What message did John remind believers of?**
We should love one another, 1 John 3:11
- ◆ **How do we know what love is?**
Jesus showed us by laying down His life for us, 1 John 3:16
- ◆ **How will we know if someone is a Christian?**
If they do what is right and love others, 1 John 3:10
- ◆ **Whom does John warn us not to be like?**
Cain, 1 John 3:12
- ◆ **How are we able to obey God and love others?**
Through Jesus' death on the cross, 1 John 3:16

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Love Actions (Older Students)

- ◆ Invite a volunteer to act out a way he can show love to others. Challenge the other students to guess what he is acting out. Play multiple rounds with different volunteers and different ways to show love. Suggestions:
 - ◇ Giving someone a hug
 - ◇ Helping someone with homework
 - ◇ Lending someone an umbrella
 - ◇ Tying someone's shoe for him or her
 - ◇ Baking a cake for someone
 - ◇ Sharing your lunch with someone
 - ◇ Saying kind words to someone
 - ◇ Shaking hands with your opponent after a game
 - ◇ Protecting someone from harm
 - ◇ Telling someone about Jesus
- ◆ Wow! There are so many ways to show love to others. We know that perfect love comes from God. Jesus showed perfect love by dying on the cross for us even though we did not deserve it. John wrote that others will know we are Christians because we love one another. We know what

love is because God has shown us great love. We can show love to others to help them learn who God is.

Who Is It? (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Divide into two teams. Teams will line up across from each other with a bell in the middle. After you read each statement, one player from each team will race to the bell. The first player to ring the bell will answer with the name of the person who said or did what was stated: Paul, James or John. Award one point if the player answers correctly. If not, allow the other team a chance to steal the point.
 - ◇ He wrote the book of Galatians. (*Paul*)
 - ◇ He wrote the book of 1 Corinthians. (*Paul*)
 - ◇ He wrote the book of James. (*James*)
 - ◇ He wrote the book of 1 John. (*John*)
 - ◇ He was one of Jesus' closest friends. (*John*)
 - ◇ He spent many years traveling as a missionary. (*Paul*)
 - ◇ He was Jesus' half brother. (*James*)
 - ◇ He was still alive when the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. (*John*)
 - ◇ He asked, "Is Christ divided? ..." (*Paul, 1 Cor 1:13*)
 - ◇ He said, "Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in action and in truth." (*John, 1 John 3:18*)
 - ◇ He declared, "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but it is the power of God to us who are being saved." (*Paul, 1 Cor. 1:10*)
 - ◇ He warned, "My brothers and sisters, do not show favoritism ..." (*James, James 2:1*)
 - ◇ He stated, "... a person is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ ..." (*Paul, Gal. 2:16*)
 - ◇ He warned, "Do not be surprised if the world hates you ..." (*John, 1 John 3:13*)
 - ◇ He said, "For whoever keeps the entire law, and yet stumbles at one point, is guilty of breaking it all." (*James, James 2:10*)

Love In Action (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Provide bottled waters and assist the class in covering the labels with construction paper or colored duct tape. Provide permanent markers and stickers. Instruct students to decorate the bottles. Suggest that they take the bottles with them. When they come across someone working outside, they can offer bottled water. Students may choose to share with others what they have been learning in the Bible and how God showed us His great love.
- ◆ John reminded believers not to just say they loved people but to show their love by their actions. Jesus showed us what love is: giving up your life for the good of others. We love others by putting their needs before our own. In doing this, we obey God's command to love one another. Why does God want us to obey Him? Obedience is our response to God's love for us. God wants everyone to know and love Him. By loving one another, we can point people to the greatest love found in Jesus.

Show Love Scenarios (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Read the following scenarios aloud. For each scenario, guide the class to discuss how they could show love in the situation.

- ✧ Your brother really wants to play outside with you, but Mom asked him to fold the laundry first. There is a lot of laundry to fold!
 - ✧ You see a classmate sitting alone at lunch, but you usually sit with your friends.
 - ✧ You hear some other classmates making fun of a new student at school.
 - ✧ Your friend is upset because her parents won't let her go to a concert.
 - ✧ You have money to buy a snack after school but your friend doesn't have any money.
 - ✧ You see a classmate getting frustrated with a math problem.
- ◆ In our Bible story today, John wrote that others will know we are Christians because we love one another. Choosing to show love is not always easy. Sometimes we want to do what is best for ourselves instead of helping others. This is why we must remember the good news about Jesus: He showed us what love is by laying down His life for our sins. We can love others because God first loved us.

The Love of the Cross (Younger Students)

- ◆ Before class, use craft sticks and glue to make cross shapes for your group. In class, give students construction paper and instruct them to draw a large heart on the paper. Have them hold the cross shapes behind the paper and rub the side of a crayon on the paper over the whole heart shape. The image of the cross should show up in the hearts. Help students write the main point along the bottom of their paper.
- ◆ John wrote that others will know we are Christians because we love one another. When we show love, others will see Jesus in our lives, just as you could see the cross in your heart drawing when you began to color it in by rubbing the crayon over the paper. Perfect love comes from God, so when people see God's perfect love coming from us, they will know that we have been changed by God's power.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ Fill in the Pieces (Older Students)
- ◆ Love in Action (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Father, thank You for showing us what perfect love looks like by sending Your Son to save us. Help us live in a way that is marked by the amazing love that can only come from You. Give us opportunities this week to show Your love to those around us. Amen.

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- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Where does love come from?
- What does love look like? How did God show His love for us?
- Why do you think Jesus said, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another"? (See John 13:35.)

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

1 JOHN 1:5-7, 3:10-18

MAIN POINT: JOHN WROTE THAT OTHERS WILL KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS BECAUSE WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

As one of Jesus' closest friends, the apostle John had lived alongside Jesus. He knew who Jesus really was, and he wrote a letter to help believers understand that Jesus was—and is—the Son of God.

John showed that God is love. If believers truly love God, they will also love one another—and that love must be shown in what believers say and do.

John said that people who are God's children live differently than people who are not God's children. Others will know we are Christians because we show love to one another.

John explained that people who do not love others are controlled by the power of death. God has set every believer free from the power of death. He has loved us and has given us life, so we can love one another.

We know what love is because Jesus showed us. He laid down His life for us. Because of Jesus' power, we can—and should—love like that too. When we have something that our brother needs, we should give it to him. If someone has enough to help but turns away and does nothing, does that person really know God's love?

John said that we must not just talk about loving others. We must love them by our actions and by telling them the truth.

Jesus Connection: John wrote a letter to teach believers in the church about the importance of showing love. Love is more than feelings or words—it is an action. Jesus showed God's love for us when He died on the cross to rescue people from sin.

Key Passage: Galatians 2:20 – I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

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FILL IN THE PIECES

Write each piece's number in the space where it belongs.



COLOR CONNECTION

Fill in the letters in order according to their colors to complete the main point of today's Bible story.

CHRISTIANSONWE

JOHN WROTE THAT OTHERS WILL

WE ARE

BECAUSE WE

ONE ANOTHER.



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LOVE IN ACTION

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the pictures that show kids showing love. Cross out the pictures of kids being mean.



KEY PASSAGE:

Galatians 2:20 – I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Why does God want us to obey Him? Obedience is our response to God's love for us.

BIBLE STORY:

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

- John wrote a letter to Christians.
- John's letter was about love.
- John wrote that others will know we are Christians because we love one another.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why do you think love is the trait Christians should be known by?
- Where does love come from?
- What does love look like?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Look for volunteer opportunities that your family can participate in together, such as working at a soup kitchen, conducting a clothing drive or doing yard work for a neighbor.
- Play dress-up with your kids. Discuss what costume props mark a sheriff, a karate warrior or a pop singer. Talk about the way love marks Christians.

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JOHN WROTE THAT OTHERS WILL KNOW WE ARE
CHRISTIANS BECAUSE WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

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LESSON 107: GRATITUDE

CHILDREN OF GOD

Romans 8:12–39



CHILDREN OF GOD

- ♦ Romans 8:12–39
- ♦ Big Picture Q&A: Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.
- ♦ Key Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!



JESUS CONNECTION

God is changing believers to be more like Jesus. We are God's children—freed from sin, given power to do what is right and adopted into God's family. Because Jesus died on the cross, God the Father welcomes us and promises a future with Him forever.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

GRATITUDE – To appreciate what someone has done for or given to me.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Rome was one of the most important cities in Paul's day. Paul understood that it was essential that the church in the capital of the Roman Empire be anchored in the gospel. Unlike many of the other churches we read about in the New Testament, Paul didn't help plant the church in Rome; in fact, he hadn't even visited yet. Paul was planning his first visit to this important church when he wrote a letter to make sure the believers there properly understood the gospel.

The book of Romans contains one of the clearest explanations of the gospel in the Bible. Paul opens his letter by explaining the sin problem that plagues us all. He then moves on to share how Jesus' perfect life, death and resurrection was sufficient to save people who trust in Jesus.

In Romans 5, people are described as helpless, ungodly, sinners and enemies apart from Christ. Then, in chapter eight, Paul begins to show how having a relationship with Jesus changes us. He describes believers as children of God in Christ. That's quite a change!

The gospel doesn't just spare us from the ultimate consequences of our sin. The gospel doesn't just make us neutral to God. Because of the gospel, we are adopted by God and have the right and privilege to call God our loving Father. Being children of God means we have nothing to fear. Our relationship with God is secure for eternity.

As you share with your students this week, be aware that some may not have good relationships with their fathers. Some may not have a father at all. Gently and lovingly explain that God is our perfect Father, a Father who is always there for us and who loves us unconditionally because of His Son, Jesus.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

We've been learning about the problems facing the early church and how God led them through the apostles. Last time, we talked about John's message to Christians. What two things did John say should identify a Christian? (*Obeys God and loves others.*) How did John say Christians would show their love for others? (*With actions, helping those in need.*) In this week's story, Paul wrote a letter to believers in Rome about how we change after believing in Jesus.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

F-A-M-I-L-Y Card Game (Older Students)

- ♦ Write the letters F-A-M-I-L-Y on separate index cards. Make three sets per two students. Form groups of four students, giving them six sets of cards. Each group will mix their cards and distribute six per player. Stack the remaining cards face-down in a draw pile. Turn one card face-up in a discard pile. On his turn, a player may take the top card from either the draw or discard pile. He should discard one so he always has six cards. The goal is for students to collect the letters needed to spell FAMILY.
- ♦ Did you know that God has a family? We will learn more about God's family in our story today.

Categories Word Game (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Pass out paper and pencils. You will say three words, and the class should write down how they think the words are related. [Example: *apple, avocado, strawberry (relation: fruits).*] Allow a few seconds for students to think and write, then allow a student to share his guess. If needed, allow others to guess until someone gives the right answer. Play multiple rounds as time allows. Use the suggested categories or create your own.
 - ❖ Leg, nose, foot (*body parts*)
 - ❖ Windy, sunny, rainy (*weather conditions*)
 - ❖ Paper, stapler, pens (*office supplies*)
 - ❖ Eggs, waffles, bacon (*breakfast foods*)
- ♦ Nice job! I have one more for you. Raise your hand if you think you know the answer for this group: father, mother, sister, brother. [Call on a student with a hand raised.] That's right: *family*. Did you know that when we become part of God's family, all believers are our brothers and sisters? Amazing! Let's hear more.

A Place to Belong (Younger Students)

- ♦ Instruct the class to spread out around the room. Explain that you will call out numbers, and students should form groups with those numbers of members. Call out numbers so everyone is included. For example, if there are 13 students in your class, call out "4 and 9" or "3 and 4 and 6." When the groups are formed, challenge them to find one thing all group members have in common. Call on each group to share. Play additional rounds with new sets of numbers, guiding the class to find similarities each time.
- ♦ When we trust in Jesus, we are all part of the family of God. God is our good and loving Father. We can go to Him, and He loves us and understands us. God takes care of us and gives us good gifts. He disciplines and guides us. And we relate to other believers as brothers and sisters in Christ.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

Hand Motions (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Work with the class to develop hand motions to help them remember the key passage. Say the verse multiple times using the hand motions. You may use the suggested motions or create your own.
 - ◆ **If anyone** [*Move hand outward in front of you to indicate a crowd.*]
 - ◆ **is in Christ** [*Touch the middle finger of each hand to the center of the palm of the opposite hand.*]
 - ◆ **he is a new creation;** [*Hold up three fingers on each hand, move them in a circle at chest level and then strike them together.*]
 - ◆ **the old has passed away** [*Hold your right hand palm up and your left hand palm down at hip height, then flip your hands to the left, switching which hand is palm up.*]
 - ◆ **and see, the new has come!** [*Hold your left hand with a slight curve in front of your chest. Use your right hand to scoop behind your left palm and lift it up to resemble a plant growing.*]
- ◆ The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write the words in our key passage to teach the church in Corinth that their old sinful way of living was gone. When you trust Christ, you become a new person with a new heart. Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Who changes us?

A: The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Children of God | Romans 8:12–39

The book of Romans is a letter that **Paul wrote to the church in Rome, even though he had never been to Rome or met the believers there.**

The city of Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire. While we don't know exactly how the church in Rome formed, we do know that **some Jews from Rome were in Jerusalem on Pentecost**—when Jesus sent the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). **They saw the disciples filled with the Holy Spirit and heard Peter preach, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." And some put their faith in Jesus.**

Eventually, those new believers returned to their home cities. Some may have returned right away. Others may have stayed in Jerusalem until the religious leaders began to persecute—to mistreat and even kill (such as Stephen)—believers because they did not want people to be taught about Jesus. **But wherever the believers traveled and lived, they gathered together, shared the good news and started local churches. Even as far away as Rome.**

But the believers in Rome were far away from Jerusalem, and the books and letters about Jesus we have in the New Testament were very new or not yet written. They needed to learn the full teachings

about Jesus. So, Paul, a leader and teacher in the early church, wrote a letter to the church in Rome to make sure they understood the truth about Jesus and the gospel.

Paul also wanted believers to remember how they should live. He wrote that when we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit and makes us His children. That changes everything about how we think and what we do. Paul explained that the Holy Spirit helps believers say no to sin, and He gives us power to live in a way that pleases God. The Holy Spirit makes us God's children! We do not need to be afraid of God; He is like a Father. He loves us!

God sent His one and only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross. Jesus never sinned. He always did what was right, but He died the death we deserve for our sin. When we trust in Jesus, God the Father forgives our sins and treats us as His own children! That is what we are.

Because we are part of God's family, Paul wrote, both our everyday life and our future are safe in his hands. In every situation we face, God works for our good and His glory. We may face problems and sufferings in this life, but God also has wonderful blessings for us. One day, we will be with Him forever.

Paul also explained that the Holy Spirit helps us when we are weak. He helps us pray and prays for us when we don't know what words to say. He changes us to be more like Jesus.

God the Father gave us the greatest gift—Jesus—and we know He will give us everything we need. God loves us, and nothing can separate us from His love. Death cannot separate us from His love. Life cannot separate us from His love. No enemy power can separate us; nothing in all of creation can separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus.

JESUS CONNECTION



God is changing believers to be more like Jesus. We are God's children—freed from sin, given power to do what is right and adopted into God's family. Because Jesus died on the cross, God the Father welcomes us and promises a future with Him forever.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

GRATITUDE – To appreciate what someone has done for or given to me.

Living LifeWise

Because God has made us His children, we can choose gratitude in every situation.

Character Connection

Being grateful doesn't come naturally to us. Yes, we say "thank you" when someone does something nice or gives us something new. But if we're in a bad mood, or when hard things happen, we sometimes forget to keep on being grateful for all the good gifts we have. Like any skill or habit, we actually have to practice being grateful.

Thankfully, a bad day doesn't mean we're out of God's family. Forgetting to be grateful doesn't mean God stops loving us. We all struggle to be grateful all the time, but we can ask God to help us choose gratitude, and ask Him to help us practice it, even on our worst days.

Let's brainstorm some ways we can express our gratitude in these situations.

- ◆ Your schedule is very busy, so one night someone else does the work you were supposed to do at home.
- ◆ Your teacher spent an extra twenty minutes helping you understand the new math lesson when you were very frustrated.
- ◆ Lots of bad things keep happening to you, but you read in Romans 8:39 that nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ **Whom was the letter written to?**
Believers living in Rome, Rom. 1:7
- ◆ **Why did some believers move away from Jerusalem?**
They were persecuted
- ◆ **Why did Paul write to the Romans?**
He wanted them to fully understand the gospel
- ◆ **Whom does God give us when we trust Jesus?**
The Holy Spirit, Rom. 8:15–16
- ◆ **What do we become when we trust Jesus?**
Children of God, Rom. 8:14–15
- ◆ **The Holy Spirit gives us the power to say "no" to what?**
Sin, Rom. 8:12–13
- ◆ **How does the Holy Spirit help us when we don't know the words to say?**
The Holy Spirit prays for us and tells us how to pray, 8:26
- ◆ **What can separate us from God's love?**
Nothing, Rom. 8:39

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Bible Walk Through (Older Students)

- ◆ Remind students that there are 66 books in the Bible, and they are divided into the Old Testament and New Testament. Explain that each testament contains several divisions. The book of Romans is found in the division called Paul's Letters. Guide the class to read Romans 8:12–17 one verse at a time. Decide who will start, and continue around until students read the entire passage. Ask specific questions about the story:
 - ◇ What will happen if we live according to the flesh? (*We will die, Rom. 8:13*)
 - ◇ What kind of Spirit have we received? (*The Spirit of adoption, Rom. 8:15*)
 - ◇ The Spirit is proof that we are what? (*God's children, Rom. 8:16*)

- ◆ Discuss the following questions:
 - ◇ What do you like about this passage?
 - ◇ Is there anything in this passage that is surprising or confusing?
 - ◇ What does this passage tell us we should do or believe?

Bible Trivia (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Form two teams. Give each team a small dry erase board and markers or a chalkboard and chalk. Have them choose a member to write answers. You will ask each question out loud. Give teams time to decide on an answer and write it on the board. Do a 3-2-1 countdown, and have both teams reveal their answer at the same time. Give a point to each team who has the correct answer.
- ◆ Trivia Questions:
 - ◇ Who wrote the letter that we learned about today? A. John; B. Paul
 - ◇ Whom was the letter written to? A. The Jews in Rome; B. The disciples in Rome
 - ◇ Who lives within us when we trust in Jesus? A. The Holy Spirit; B. Jesus
 - ◇ The Holy Spirit living in us is proof that we are what? A. God's children; B. Saved from sin
 - ◇ The Holy Spirit helps us to say "no" to what? A. Fun; B. Sin
 - ◇ How does the Holy Spirit help us when we are weak? A. Prays for us; B. Helps us obey God
 - ◇ What can separate us from God's love? A. Difficult situations; B. Nothing
 - ◇ What do we become when we trust Jesus? A. Perfect; B. Children of God
 - ◇ Who changes us? A. We change ourselves; B. The Holy Spirit changes us

Stronger Than Glue (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before class, purchase small plastic chips and super glue. Help the students write their name or initials on one plastic chip and *God's Love* on another. Apply a small dot of non-toxic super glue and stick the two chips together. The glue will set almost instantly, making the chips nearly impossible to get apart. [Hint: If needed, a small amount of acetone nail polish remover on a cotton swab should dissolve the glue and unstick fingers.]
- ◆ Super glue forms a very tight bond that can be nearly impossible to pull apart. Our Bible story today taught us that the bond between God and those who believe in Jesus is stronger than the strongest glue! The Bible says that nothing can separate us from God's love. When we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit and makes us His children.

Scratch Art (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Pass out scratch art paper and pointed craft sticks. Demonstrate how to carefully scratch the art paper to reveal colors underneath. Invite the class to draw pictures of their families. Suggest they add other people they know who are Christians. Remind students that when we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit and makes us His children. God adopts us into His family, and all believers are our brothers and sisters in Christ. When students finish their drawings, provide construction paper and scissors. Show the class how to lay their drawing on a piece of construction paper and trim the paper to about a 1-inch border. Provide glue sticks for them to secure their drawings to the paper. Allow students to decorate the frames behind their pictures. Suggest they display their pictures in their rooms at home as a reminder that God wants everyone to be part of His family.

- ◆ When we become part of God's family, all believers—from all times, nations and languages—become our brothers and sisters in Christ. God is our heavenly Father. He loves us and takes care of us, and one day we will live with Him forever.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ Adopted ABCs (Older Students)
- ◆ Word Search (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, it is so wonderful to know that we can call You “Father.” Thank You for sending Jesus to die for us so that we can be adopted into Your family as sons and daughters. Help us to live a life that is changed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How do we become children of God?
- How does being in God's family change how we think and act?
- Can anything separate us from God's love?



CHILDREN OF GOD

ROMANS 8:12-39

MAIN POINT: WHEN WE TRUST IN JESUS, GOD GIVES US THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MAKES US HIS CHILDREN.

Paul wrote a letter to the believers in Rome. He wanted to make sure they believed the right things about Jesus. Paul also wanted believers to remember how they should live.

Paul wrote that when we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit and makes us His children. That changes everything about how we think and what we do.

Paul explained that the Holy Spirit helps believers say no to sin, and He gives us power to live in a way that pleases God. The Holy Spirit makes us God's children! We do not need to be afraid of God; He is like a Father. He loves us! Because we are part of God's family, our future is incredibly bright. One day we will be with Him forever.

Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit helps us when we are weak. He helps us pray when we don't know what words to say. He is changing us to be more like Jesus.

God the Father gave us the greatest gift—Jesus—and we know He will give us everything we need. God loves us, and nothing can separate us from His love. Death cannot separate us from His love. Life cannot separate us from His love. No enemy power can separate us; nothing in all of creation can separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus.

Jesus Connection: God is changing believers to be more like Jesus. We are God's children—freed from sin, given power to do what is right and adopted into God's family. Because Jesus died on the cross, God the Father welcomes us and promises a future with Him forever.

Key Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

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ADOPTED ABCS

Add or subtract from the letters to reveal who we are when we trust in Jesus.

A+2	G+1	K-2	P-4	B+2	S-1	C+2	J+4
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
L+3	E+1	P+3	M+2	E-1			
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>			

PART OF THE FAMILY

Circle the things we enjoy as children of God.

hope

adoption into God's family

separation from God

fear

future glory with Jesus

forgiveness from sin

power to say no to sin

a loving heavenly Father

slavery to sin

uncertainty

the presence of the Holy Spirit

power to live in a way that pleases God

anxiety

a bright future with God

everything we need



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WORD SEARCH

INSTRUCTIONS: Find and circle each of the key words listed. Words marked with stars are hidden backward.

E	W	X	W	T	T	Q	A	M	S	F	Y	R	L	M	H	P	L	D	
E	S	W	D	E	C	P	D	I	P	H	D	Z	E	M	J	P	J	I	
X	G	D	Y	P	T	S	A	H	R	Q	N	Q	Z	E	Q	H	P	T	
E	F	R	W	Q	D	S	F	B	I	D	S	R	E	O	D	U	B	T	
E	D	R	Q	O	S	H	U	K	T	E	L	G	W	F	Y	B	B	G	
C	X	R	U	P	G	H	S	Y	Y	J	A	O	Y	R	E	V	A	L	
T	B	U	T	P	O	V	S	N	W	L	O	L	E	E	C	E	Q	O	
M	Z	T	D	W	A	Y	S	E	H	O	A	Q	E	E	F	Z	F	R	
U	E	D	L	N	Q	S	S	Y	L	J	Y	M	B	D	H	X	D	I	
D	X	A	O	F	T	H	U	Q	N	F	Z	F	D	O	P	P	K	I	
X	G	A	O	E	O	G	L	K	Q	S	K	N	D	M	F	X	U	I	
A	U	J	P	N	S	O	M	P	F	S	P	E	D	E	Z	J	T	E	
L	L	E	E	P	K	J	I	F	C	D	A	M	T	M	T	G	D	D	
W	E	A	J	M	Z	K	M	S	P	U	H	S	I	Q	S	C	T	J	
Y	U	A	C	O	C	Z	Y	W	U	I	P	I	D	L	G	Y	L	C	
P	I	C	E	L	I	F	E	M	Q	I	P	I	D	L	G	Y	L	C	
I	D	E	L	I	F	E	M	Q	I	P	I	D	L	G	Y	L	C		

ADOPTED*
CHILD*

JESUS*
FLESH*

SIN
LIFE

SPIRIT
GLORIFIED

FREEDOM
HOPE*

KEY PASSAGE:

2 Corinthians 5:17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

• Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.

BIBLE STORY:

CHILDREN OF GOD

- Paul wrote a letter to Christians living in Rome.
- Paul wanted the Romans to understand how their faith was changing them.
- Faith in Jesus made them children of God.
- When we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit and makes us His children.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

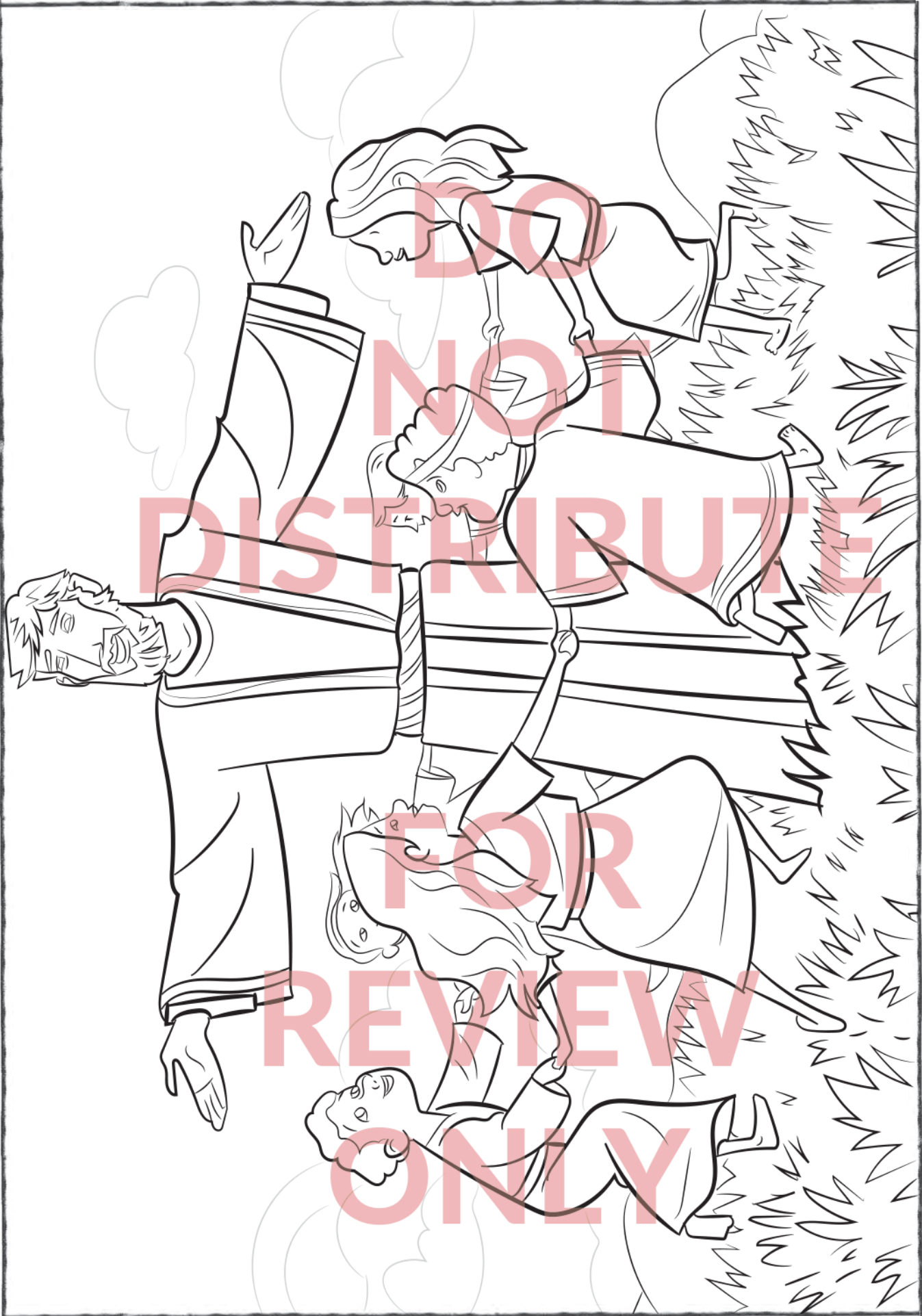
- What does it mean to be a child of God?
- Why is God the best Father?
- How do you feel when you think about God as your Father?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Help your family do some research about kids you could sponsor through an international charitable fund. Discuss how God cares for us.

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WHEN WE TRUST IN JESUS, GOD GIVES US THE
HOLY SPIRIT AND MAKES US HIS CHILDREN.

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LESSON 108: GROWTH

A TRANSFORMED MIND

Romans 12:1–18; 1 Corinthians 1:4–9, 12:1–26; Philippians 1:3–11



A TRANSFORMED MIND

- ♦ Romans 12:1–18; 1 Corinthians 1:4–9, 12:1–26; Philippians 1:3–11
- ♦ Big Picture Q&A: Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.
- ♦ Key Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!



JESUS CONNECTION

God wants us to show friendship and love to one another. As believers, we all belong to Jesus. His death and resurrection bring us together. The Holy Spirit changes the way we think and live so we can love one another as God has loved us.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

GROWTH – Becoming more mature by learning from my mistakes.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Many of the letters Paul wrote follow the same basic outline. The first part of each letter focuses on the important truths of the gospel. The second part of each letter then explains how those truths can and should shape how we live every day: gospel transformation.

When it comes to Romans, the first eleven chapters are Paul's explanation of the gospel, while the final five chapters center on how that gospel changes us. Romans 12:1–2 is the hinge linking these two sections together.

Paul urges believers to keep in mind the mercies of God. God's grace, mercy and kindness led Him to provide Jesus to pay our penalty for sin so that we might be adopted into God's family. Then, Paul helps us look forward by summarizing the impact the gospel should have on us. We are to be living sacrifices who please God. How can we do that? The answer is in Romans 12:2. We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. A renewed mind transformed by the Holy Spirit will help us see what pleases God, what His will is.

The gospel first changes the heart and mind. Then, as a result, the gospel changes how a person lives. This is how we please and glorify God. As you share with your students this week, remind them of how important gospel transformation is. Help them to see that they cannot please God by their own effort—and God doesn't want them to try.

Help your class understand what it means to rest in the gospel—in who they have been made in Christ Jesus—and how to allow the Holy Spirit to work in their minds, hearts and actions. Share that one of the ways God transforms our minds is by us reading His Word, and encourage them to spend time reading the Bible this week.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

After the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, the gospel spread. Many people believed in Jesus, and new churches formed. Paul traveled as a missionary to tell people about Jesus. He wrote letters to teach new Christians about Jesus. Do you remember who else wrote letters? (*James, John, Peter.*)

Last week, we learned about a letter Paul wrote to a church he hadn't yet visited. Do you remember where it was? (*Rome.*) Paul told them about a change to our identity when we are saved. *Identity* is a word that means "who you are." Who do we become when we trust in Jesus? (*Children of God.*) How are we able to become children of God? (*Through the Holy Spirit.*) Today, we will learn about the way the Holy Spirit changes our thoughts and our actions. Our story this week is called "A Transformed Mind."

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Transformation Illustrations (Older Students)

- ◆ Give each student a piece of paper. Instruct them to fold their paper into quarters and number the squares 1 to 4. Point out that things around us are changing and transforming all the time. Seasons change, plants grow and wither, messy rooms are cleaned up and so on. Encourage students to draw four pictures showing how something changes. They should start in the first square and illustrate progressive changes in a series. If the class needs prompts, suggest a seed becoming a tree, a caterpillar becoming a butterfly, a balloon being inflated, a man growing a beard.
- ◆ Did you know that, when a person trusts in Jesus, he or she is transformed, or changed, inside? This isn't an immediate change, so we might not notice it right away. We'll learn more during today's Bible story.

Groups and Lines (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Prompt the class to line up in a particular order or to gather in groups as they discover things they have in common. Call out the following prompts or create your own:
 - ◇ Line up in alphabetical order by your first name.
 - ◇ Line up in alphabetical order by your last name.
 - ◇ Gather with people who have the same favorite color as you.
 - ◇ Gather with people who have the same eye color.
 - ◇ Line up in order of your birthday.
 - ◇ Gather with people who have the same number of siblings as you.
- ◆ Isn't it interesting how God created us to be different in so many ways and also the same in many ways? In today's Bible story, we will talk about some of the ways God makes believers different and the same.

What Makes You Special? (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Instruct the class to sit in a circle. Go around the group one at a time, allowing students to explain something about themselves that is special. Give them a few moments to demonstrate any special talents they have.

- ◆ We all have skills and talents that make us unique and special. God gives each of us different talents, and He wants us to work together to use those talents for His glory. Today, we will learn about some special talents and abilities God gives Christians specifically through the Holy Spirit. What do you think they might be?

Mirror Emotions (Younger Students)

- ◆ Have students find a partner. Each pair should take turns being the leader and the mirror. The leader will make faces to show different emotions, and the mirror should do her best to mimic the faces the leader makes.
- ◆ Those were some great emotion faces. And great job being mirrors that reflected the emotions your partners showed. In our story today, we will learn about the ways the Holy Spirit changes us to be more like Jesus. One part of the change causes Christians to be happy with those who are happy and sad with those who are sad. What do you think that means?

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

Syllable Challenge (Older Students)

- ◆ Say the key passage together using the motions developed in the previous session. Have students find a partner. The partners should count the total syllables in their first and last names. [For example, Jaylen Webb has three syllables.] That is how many times she should say the key passage to her partner. Make sure each partner gets a turn to say the key passage. Challenge the class to read the passage throughout the week and try to memorize it.

Ball Pass (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Say the key passage together using the motions developed in the previous session. Invite students to stand in a line or circle. Give the first student in line a ball and ask her to say the first word of the key passage and then pass the ball to the next student in line. He will say the second word and pass the ball. Continue until each student has said a word or students complete the key passage. Play again as time allows to ensure everyone has a chance to participate.
- ◆ Our key passage teaches us that being a Christian is more than just saying a prayer or believing something that doesn't affect us. When we believe in Jesus, our lives completely change! We go from dead in sin to alive in Christ. Everyone in Christ is a new creation. We memorize verses like this to help us know that we are no longer trapped by sin but freed to live for Jesus' glory.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Who changes us?

A: The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

A Transformed Mind | Romans 12:1–18; 1 Corinthians 1:4–9, 12:1–26; Philippians 1:3–11

As a missionary in the early church, **Paul traveled all over, sharing the good news about Jesus and teaching believers. When Paul couldn't visit a church, he wrote letters to remind the believers of Jesus' words and explain how to follow Him.**

Paul wrote one letter to the church in Rome to teach and encourage the believers in the capital of the Roman empire. **Rome was not an easy place for a church to grow** because the governors didn't like Jews. Also, **Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles were still learning how to worship God together.**

Paul wrote about how the Holy Spirit changes those who believe in Jesus. He said believers should live differently than people who do not trust in Jesus. He said they should offer themselves as a living sacrifice to God each day, be friends with one another and show love to everyone.

"Love one another like a family," Paul wrote. He said, "If someone is happy, be happy with him. If he is sad, be sad with him. Get along with one another as much as possible."

Paul reminded the believers that God is merciful. He shows us love even though we are sinners and do not deserve His love. "So, live in a way that pleases God. Do not let the unbelievers around you change how you think. Let God change how you think. The Holy Spirit lives inside you. He shows you the right way to live, and you will know God's good plan for you."

In the city of Corinth, the church was having trouble getting along. Instead of loving and accepting one another, they acted as if some believers were better than others. They paid more attention to the good things God had given them than to Jesus. They even said God gave some believers better spiritual gifts than others!

So, Paul wrote to remind them, "Do not think you are better or worse than you really are. Not every believer is the same. God gives faith to all believers, and not everyone has the same amount of faith. God gives each believer different gifts. Some people have the gift of prophecy or the gift of teaching. Some have the gift of serving, or encouraging, or giving, or leading or showing mercy. Believers must work together, like different parts of a body working together. We are all one body in Jesus."

Later, when Paul was in prison in Rome, he wrote a letter to encourage the disciples in Philippi. Paul was happy and thanked God because God was working in their lives and changing them to be more like Jesus. The believers were spreading the good news. They helped Paul by sending him money and praying for him. He prayed that God's Spirit would fill them with joy and love of Christ as they grew in the knowledge and wisdom of God. Paul promised that God had started a good work of faith in them and would help them continue in their faith until the day of Christ's return.

JESUS CONNECTION



God wants us to show friendship and love to one another. As believers, we all belong to Jesus. His death and resurrection bring us together. The Holy Spirit changes the way we think and live so we can love one another as God has loved us.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

GROWTH – Becoming more mature by learning from my mistakes.

Living LifeWise

Because God has given us the Holy Spirit, we have all that we need to grow in maturity.

Character Connection

Growing our bodies isn't something that we have control over, is it? We can't make ourselves taller or older by trying very hard. God made us so we just grow. But becoming mature is different. That's something we have to work on. We have to learn to live and think and act maturely. If we don't practice being a grown-up, we will think and speak and act like children forever, and that is not where God wants us to be.

Growing more mature takes time, effort and a lot of help from others. Before you can learn algebra, you learn multiplication. You have to learn how to do little chores at home before you can clean a whole room. Before you can play basketball, you have to learn to dribble. In every area, we need people who will teach us what we need to know.

God wants us to grow up in spiritual things, too. So, He provided His Spirit to help us learn what we need to know and gave us the ability to do what He calls us to do. He gives us the power to live God's way. We can't do that on our own; we have to depend on Him. But God provides everything we need so that we can grow, over time, to be more like Jesus.

Do these situations show a mature response or not? If not, what would it look like to respond maturely?

- ◆ The teacher announces a surprise quiz, but you haven't been paying much attention in class lately.
- ◆ You are supposed to put your uniform in the laundry to be washed, but you forgot again and the game is today.
- ◆ As you are on your way out the door to play, your neighbor asks you to watch her little boy so she can make an important phone call. You immediately start playing with her little boy.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ What kinds of books are Romans, 1 Corinthians and Philippians?

Letters to churches

- ◆ Who wrote these books?

The Apostle Paul

- ◆ What does Paul encourage us to offer ourselves as?

A living sacrifice, Rom. 12:1

- ◆ Whom should we allow to change how we think?

God, Rom. 12:2

- ◆ How do we know what the right way to live is?

The Bible tells us and the Holy Spirit helps us understand and remember it, Rom. 12:2

- ◆ Why does God give believers different gifts?

To help the church work together and become stronger, Rom. 12:5

- ◆ How should we behave towards people who are happy?

We should be happy and celebrate with them, Rom. 12:15

- ◆ How should we behave towards those who are sad?

We should be sad with them and comfort them, Rom. 12:15–16

- ◆ How did the Philippian church help Paul?

While he was in prison, they sent money and prayed for Paul, Phil. 4:10–14

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5–10 MIN)

Who? Where? What? (Older Students)

- ◆ Divide the class into two or three teams. Hold three rounds: Who? Where? What? Each team will be given the first hint, number 5, for a word before they attempt to guess the answer. A total of five hints may be given per team. The sooner a team guesses, the more points they earn. The number of points awarded correspond to the number in front of the hint. For a more competitive game, give both teams the same mystery word. The team that discovers the mystery word first wins the points.

- ◆ Mystery words:

◆ WHO (People):

- Stephen (5. Was filled with the Holy Spirit and God's power to teach and perform signs and wonders. 4. Stood up to the religious leaders and taught the Bible with such wisdom they couldn't argue. 3. The religious leaders found people to falsely accuse him of breaking the law. 2. He saw Jesus standing at God's right hand. 1. He was stoned to death because of his faith in Jesus.)
- Paul (5. Was a Jewish religious leader. 4. Was at Stephen's stoning. 3. Hunted Christians to put them in jail. 2. Saw Jesus on the road to Damascus. 1. Became a missionary to take the good news to the Gentiles.)
- Jews (5. Lived in Canaan. 4. Abraham's Family. 3. Spent 400 years in Egypt. 2. Were first called this during exile to Babylon. 1. God's chosen people.)
- Disciples (5. A group of Jewish men. 4. Helped share the gospel. 3. Chosen by Jesus. 2. Became known as the apostles after Jesus returned to Heaven. 1. Twelve original followers of Jesus.)

◆ WHERE (Places):

- Jerusalem (5. Home base for the church leaders. 4. The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost in this city. 3. The city where the temple was located. 2. The city where Jesus was tried and crucified. 1. The city Nehemiah rebuilt a wall around.)
- Rome (5. Paul sent a letter here to a church he had never personally met. 4. The city Paul was kept a prisoner in by guards. 3. The city that was the capital of the Roman Empire. 2. The capital city of Italy. 1. The city that the Roman church lived in.)
- Prison (5. A place Paul was forced to go several times. 4. Paul went here with Silas and later on his own. 3. A place that God broke open with an earthquake. 2. Paul was put in chains here. 1. People who break the government's laws are kept here.)

- Philippi (5. Paul sent a letter to a church in this city while imprisoned in Rome. 4. Christians from this city helped Paul by sending money to him. 3. A city in Macedonia. 2. The city where Paul shared the gospel with Lydia. 1. The city where Paul shared the gospel with the jailer holding him in prison.)

❖ **WHAT (Things):**

- Pentecost (5. A special Jewish celebration that occurred 50 days after Jesus rose from the dead. 4. Jews from all over the world gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate this feast. 3. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to the disciples on this special day. 2. The Holy Spirit appeared as tongues of fire. 1. The disciples were given the ability to praise God in many people's native languages.)
- The gospel (5. The disciples shared this. 4. This was taken to many different places and shared with many different people. 3. Most of the disciples died because they believed in this. 2. The good news. 1. Jesus died for our sins and was raised on the third day.)
- The Church (5. It is all over the world. 4. It has many different parts and abilities. 3. Its mission is to go everywhere, make disciples, baptize and teach about God. 2. One body in Christ, many members. 1. A group of people who worship Jesus as Lord.)
- Church Letter (5. These were sent to places Paul had gone. 4. They gave instructions for the church. 3. They better explained how to live as a Christian. 2. They included a greeting, body and closing. 1. They were written by Paul and read by the churches.)

Balloon Roundup (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before the session, blow up eight balloons and write the following sentences on them. Do not include the answers.
 - ❖ God is merciful. (*True, Rom. 12:1*)
 - ❖ The Holy Spirit lives inside you. (*True*)
 - ❖ The Holy Spirit shows you the right way to live. (*True, Rom. 12:2*)
 - ❖ Every believer is the same. (*False, Rom. 12:6*)
 - ❖ God gives faith to all believers. (*True, Rom. 12:3*)
 - ❖ Everyone has the same gifts. (*False, Rom. 12:6*)
 - ❖ We are all one body in Jesus. (*True, Rom. 12:5*)
 - ❖ God wants us to show friendship and love to one another. (*True, Rom. 12:10*)
- ◆ Use tape to mark two 5-foot squares on the floor, one at each end of the room. Make a *T* for *true* in one square and an *F* for *false* in the other. Scatter the prepared balloons around the room. Form two teams. Allow a player from the first team to choose a balloon and read it aloud. If your class struggles with reading, be ready to help. The team should decide if the statement is true or false and put the balloon in that square. Reveal the answer and award a point for a correct answer. Alternate between the teams until all of the balloons are sorted. The team with the most points wins.

Reverse Simon Says (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Invite the class to play a game of Simon Says but with the rules reversed. If you say, “Simon Says,” students *should not* follow your lead. If you omit “Simon Says,” students *should* do as you say. [Suggested commands: lift your feet as high as you can, rub your tummy and pat your head, play air guitar, act like a monkey, stand on one foot, yawn, wiggle your body.]
- ◆ Following Jesus really turns the ways of the world upside-down. Instead of looking out for yourself, God wants us to show friendship and love to one another. Instead of believing, “I am the most important person in my life,” we believe, “Jesus is the most important person in my life.” Becoming a Christian transforms how we interact with God and with others. We all belong to Jesus. His death and resurrection brings us together. The Holy Spirit changes the way we think and live so we can love one another as God has loved us.

Friendship Mural (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Provide the class with blank sheets of paper and crayons, pencils and markers. Allow them to create a mural of their different ideas about what friendship looks like. Encourage them to draw students playing with one another, helping one another, worshiping together, reading their Bibles together and comforting one another in sad times.
- ◆ God wants us to show friendship and love to one another. We can do this in a lot of different ways. We can celebrate and play with others when we are in happy times, and we can comfort each other and pray together when we are sad. We can worship God together and study our Bibles together. There are many ways to show God’s love with our actions. It’s hard to do these things on our own, but with God’s power, we can live like Jesus. Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God’s glory.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ Word of the Day (Older Students)
- ◆ From Dead to Life (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord, we know that we are made new when we believe in Jesus, Your Son. Thank You for sending Him to save us. Thank You that the Holy Spirit transforms our minds and hearts to want what You want and live as Jesus lived. Help our lives to be beautiful pictures of Your love and kindness. Use us to glorify Your name. Amen.

REVIEW
ONLY

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FOR REVIEW ONLY

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How does the Holy Spirit change us when we trust in Jesus?
- How does God want us to treat one another? Why?
- How did God show love and friendship to us?



A TRANSFORMED MIND

ROMANS 12:1-18; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:4-9, 12:1-26; PHILIPPIANS 1:3-7

MAIN POINT: GOD WANTS US TO SHOW
FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE TO ONE ANOTHER.

Paul wrote a letter to the believers in Rome about how they should live differently than people who do not trust in Jesus. Paul said that God calls believers to be friends with one another and to show love to everyone.

Paul reminded the believers that God is merciful. He shows us love even though we are sinners and do not deserve His love. Paul said, "So live in a way that pleases God. Do not let the unbelievers around you change how you think. Let God change how you think. The Holy Spirit lives inside you. He shows you the right way to live, and you will know God's good plan for you."

"Do not think you are better or worse than you really are. Not every believer is the same. God gives faith to all believers, and not everyone has the same amount of faith. God gives each believer different gifts. Believers must work together, like different parts of a body working together. We are all one body in Jesus."

Our job is to love one another like a family. Paul wrote, "If someone is happy, we are happy with him. If he is sad, we are sad with him. Get along with one another as much as possible."

Later, Paul was in prison in Rome. He wrote a letter to Christians in Philippi. The Christians helped Paul by sending him money and praying for him. Paul knew that God was changing them to be more like Jesus.

Jesus Connection: God wants us to show friendship and love to one another. As believers, we all belong to Jesus. His death and resurrection bring us together. The Holy Spirit changes the way we think and live so we can love one another as God has loved us.

Key Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!














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WORD OF THE DAY

Write the first letter of each picture in the box above it. Then, circle the correct definition for the code word.

<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>	
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- A.** changed in a minor way so that it works better
- B.** continued to be the same as before
- C.** changed completely and usually in a good way

SHOW IT!

Draw examples of how you can show friendship and love to others.

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FROM DEAD TO LIFE

INSTRUCTIONS: Change one letter at a time to turn the word *dead* into the word *life*. Use the picture clues for help.

D E A D =



The opposite of alive.

=



A small decoration to thread onto a string.

=



Your elbow lets your arm do this.

=



When you let your friend borrow something.

=



When you let your friend borrow something yesterday.

=



The fuzz you find in your pockets or clothes dryer.

=



A straight connection between two points.

L I F E

KEY PASSAGE:

2 Corinthians 5:17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.

BIBLE STORY:

A TRANSFORMED MIND

- Paul wrote letters to believers in many places.
- Paul wanted Christians to understand the ways God was changing them.
- God wants us to show friendship and love to one another.
- The Holy Spirit changes us to help us live new lives.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why do our minds need to be transformed?
- Why does God want us to show friendship and love?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

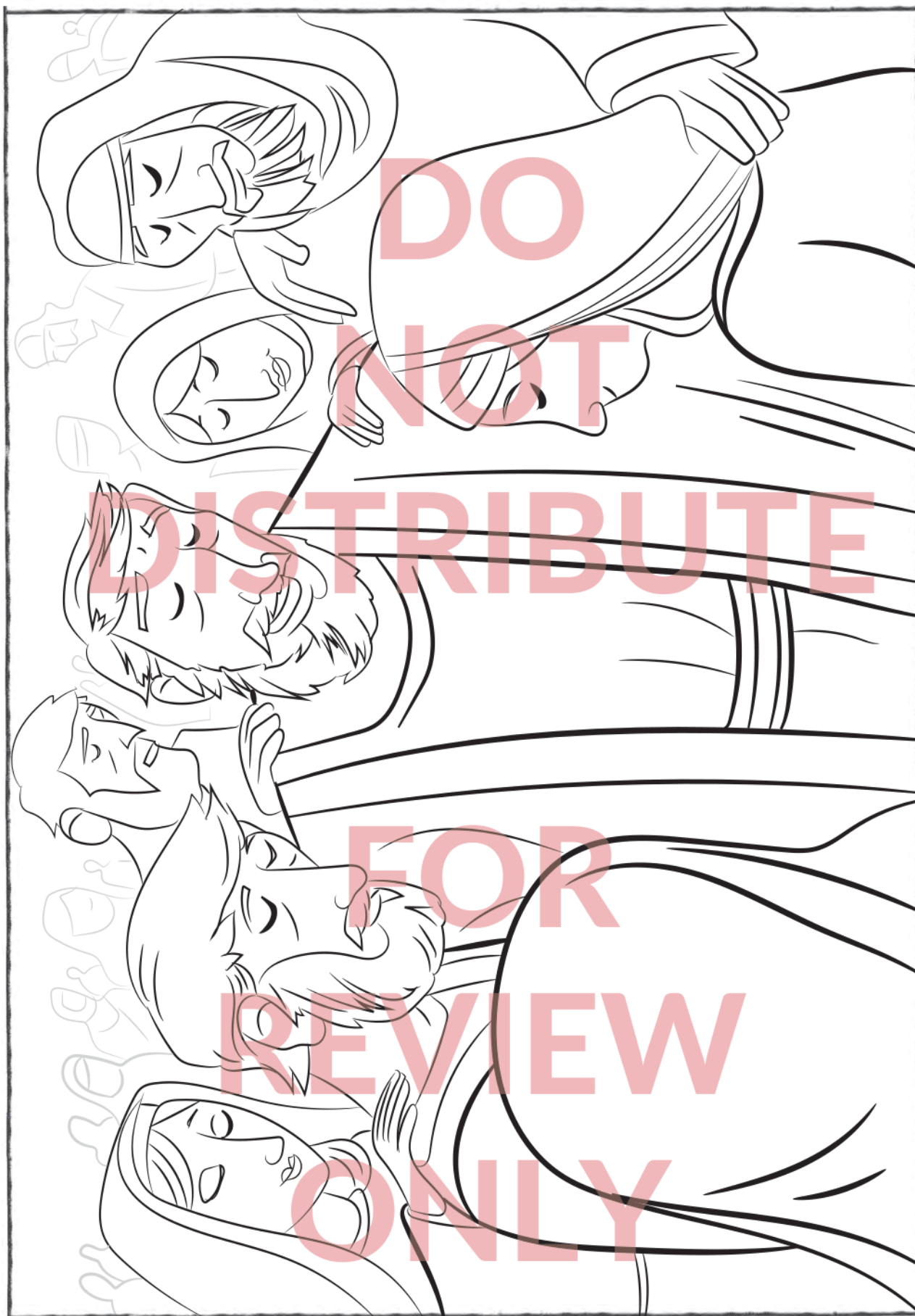
- Help your kids learn a few origami designs. Talk about how folding the paper can transform it. Highlight the difference between this kind of change and the changes God makes in us.

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GOD WANTS US TO SHOW FRIENDSHIP
AND LOVE TO ONE ANOTHER.

LIFEWISE
ACADEMY
♦♦♦
POWERED BY THE GOSPEL PROJECT



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LESSON 109: SELF-CONTROL

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Acts 13:13–14; Galatians 5:16–26

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT



- ◆ Acts 13:13–14; Galatians 5:16–26
- ◆ Big Picture Q&A: Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.
- ◆ Key Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

JESUS CONNECTION



When we trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit begins to change us. Paul told the believers in the Galatian church how to recognize that God is working in someone's life. People who are saved by Jesus become more like Him, and the Holy Spirit gives them power to say no to sin and to live in a way that pleases God.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

SELF-CONTROL – Being able to manage myself so I can do what's right.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

When we trust in Jesus, we become children of God, and the gospel changes us. Our thinking changes so we can understand what pleases God and know His will. But gospel transformation doesn't stop there. The gospel also changes how we live each day.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul described the fruit of the flesh—what a person's life looks like apart from Christ: anger, jealousy, selfishness, impurity, strife and similar things. Paul shared that people who live like this will not enter God's kingdom because this behavior reveals the condition of the person's heart. These behaviors are the fruit of that person's sinful heart.

Then, Paul told the believers in the Galatian church how to recognize that God is working in someone's life. He contrasted the fruit of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit—what a person's life looks like in Christ: love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. This is the fruit produced in a person whose heart is changed by Christ.

As you share the fruit of the Spirit with your class this week, be careful to help them see that this fruit is produced by the Holy Spirit working in them. It is not called the fruit of the Christian. Our response to the fruit of the Spirit should not be to think of ways we can be more loving, joyful, peaceful or kind. That is mistakenly believing the fruit is produced by us! When we trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit begins to change us.

Our response should be to consider how we can allow the Holy Spirit to change us to become a person who is more loving, joyful, peaceful and kind. People who are saved by Jesus become more like Him, and

the Holy Spirit gives them power to say no to sin and to live in a way that pleases God. The fruit of the Spirit reflects true gospel transformation.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

During our last two lessons, we talked about what it means to be part of God's family. The Apostle Paul wrote that God adopts us into His family. From the moment we trust in Jesus, who do we become? (*Children of God.*) We've also learned about the way our minds are transformed, or changed. God wants us to understand what His word says and to live it out. What are some ways that God wants us to think and act differently as believers? [Answers will vary.] When we choose to trust in Jesus to save us from sin, what helper does God send to live in us? (*The Holy Spirit.*) Today, we are learning about the qualities that the Holy Spirit will produce in our lives as we follow Jesus. Our story is called "The Fruit of the Spirit."

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Twenty Questions (Older Students)

- ◆ Think of a mystery Bible object: a person, place or thing. Invite the class to ask yes-or-no questions to figure out the mystery object. Challenge them to identify the object in 20 or fewer questions. Use tally marks to keep track of how many questions have been asked. Play additional rounds as time allows.
- ◆ What questions might you ask to figure out if someone is a Christian? [Allow students to respond.] Those are some good questions. Today's Bible story will explain one way we know God is at work in us or in others.

Two Trees (Older Students)

- ◆ Lead the class in a discussion about how they might tell the difference between two kinds of trees: a healthy tree and sick tree.
- ◆ If a tree doesn't have fruit growing, it could be difficult to tell what kind of tree it is. Trees that produce fruit would be much easier to tell apart. Today, we will talk about a kind of "fruit" that grows in our lives when we follow Jesus. What kind of fruit do you think it is?

Fruit Lists (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Form teams of three or four students. Provide each team with paper and pencils. Challenge the students to list as many fruits in different categories as they can in 60 seconds. If your group cannot read or write, consider allowing groups to call out fruits. [Example categories: different colors of fruit, different shapes of fruit, fruit that you can and can't eat the skin, etc.]
- ◆ Great job coming up with all those different kinds of fruit. Today, we will learn about the fruit of the Spirit. What do you think it means to have "the fruit of the Spirit" in your life?

Examine Plants (Younger Students)

- ◆ Display various plants for the class to gently examine. Consider providing a field guide for students to use to identify the plants. Ask the class what parts of the plant they might look at to determine what kind of plant it is. Guide them to talk about how they know a plant is alive. What signs of life does it show?

- ♦ One way we can identify a plant is by its fruit. For example, if a plant produces apples, we know it is an apple tree. Do you know that believers produce fruit? It's not fruit you can eat, but it is proof that God is at work in a person's life. Let's find out more.

Fruit Basket Toss (Younger students)

- ♦ Divide into two teams. Invite the teams to line up on one side of the room and place a basket about six feet in front of the first player in each line. Give both teams a pile of play fruit and challenge them to take turns trying to toss their fruits into their respective baskets. The first team to land all of their fruit in their basket wins.
- ♦ Wow, you tossed a lot of fruit into those baskets. Today, we will talk about a kind of fruit that you can't toss or eat. We will learn about the fruit of the Spirit.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

Eraser Challenge (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ On a dry erase board or chalkboard, write out the key passage. Invite a volunteer to read the verse for the class and then erase one word of their choice. Invite another volunteer to do the same, erasing a second word. Continue in this way until the class has erased all the words and are saying the verse from memory.

Back and Forth (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Divide the class into two groups. Have the entire class say the passage together. Then, have the first group say the first two words of the passage, then the second group say the next two words of the passage. Continue alternating groups after every two words until the passage is finished. Repeat as time allows.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Who changes us?

A: The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

The Fruit of the Spirit | Acts 13:13–14; Galatians 5:16–26

On Paul's first missionary journey, he and Barnabas shared the good news about Jesus in four cities in Galatia: Pisidian Antioch, Iconum, Lystra and Derbe. Galatia was an area in the Roman Empire located in modern-day Turkey.

Many Galatian Gentiles, or non-Jews, believed, but some of the Jewish leaders were upset. They did not believe that faith in Jesus was the only way to be saved from sin. They believed they needed to follow the laws of Moses in order to be accepted by God. **After Paul left Galatia, the Jewish leaders confused new Christians by teaching that faith alone in Jesus could not save them.** They said **the new believers also had to obey the Law of Moses in order to be saved from sin.**

Paul wrote a letter to the Galatian believers to explain that following the Law of Moses could not keep them from sinning. He reminded them that God gives the Holy Spirit, who guides them and gives them power, to help Christians become more like Jesus. The Holy Spirit changes the way we think and act.

When sin is in control, we do wrong things. We show hatred, jealousy, anger, selfishness and greed. We fight and get into trouble. People who live like this will not enter God's kingdom.

But Jesus frees us from the power of sin. The Holy Spirit lives in us and gives us power to do what is right. When the Holy Spirit is in control, people can choose love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These actions are the fruit of the Spirit—proof that the Spirit is in someone—like how a healthy tree produces fruit. This fruit pleases God.

Paul wrote that when we trust in Jesus, we no longer want to do whatever pleases ourselves. The Holy Spirit gives us power to say no to things like hatred, jealousy, anger, selfishness and greed. The more we know Jesus, the more we will want to live to please God. Since the Holy Spirit lives in us, we must let the Holy Spirit guide us.



JESUS CONNECTION

When we trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit begins to change us. Paul told the believers in the Galatian church how to recognize that God is working in someone's life. People who are saved by Jesus become more like Him, and the Holy Spirit gives them power to say no to sin and to live in a way that pleases God.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

SELF-CONTROL – Being able to manage myself so I can do what's right.

Living LifeWise

God gives us His Spirit, who helps us live with self-control.

Character Connection

One of the hardest parts of having a new pet is teaching them to control themselves. Puppies chew and shred things. Kitties might scratch. Both of them have to be taught how to go outside or to the litter box. We have to help them learn how to choose the right things instead of the wrong ones.

We need help learning how to choose the right things too. Our parents and teachers do that. But we also need the Holy Spirit to help us live God's way and say no to sin. When He is in control, our lives will be full of His qualities—including self-control.

When sin is in control of us, we will be just like that new puppy or kitty. We'll do whatever feels good to us all the time, no matter what it costs someone else. But the Holy Spirit gives us the power to control our words, our actions, our reactions and our choices. We can ask Him to help us in this area every day so that our lives are changed to look like Jesus.

I'll share a situation when someone doesn't show self-control. What might it look like to show self-control instead?

- ◆ At the grocery store, Joey pointed and said, "That lady looks like a grumpy elf!"
- ◆ Sarah saw someone come out of the bathroom with toilet paper stuck to her shoe. She pointed it out to all her friends and laughed.
- ◆ At recess, Cameron's classmates picked a game he didn't want to play, so he threw the ball across the playground and yelled.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ **Whom did Paul write the letter of Galatians to?**
Christians in Galatia
- ◆ **Were most of the believers in Galatia Jews or Gentiles?**
Gentiles
- ◆ **Why did the Jewish leaders in Galatia make trouble for Paul?**
They didn't believe the good news about Jesus
- ◆ **Why did Paul write a letter to the Christians in Galatia?**
To help them understand the truth about the gospel, Gal. 1:11-12
- ◆ **What does the Holy Spirit change?**
The way we think and act
- ◆ **What will happen if we listen to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to guide us?**
We will do what God wants, Gal. 5:16
- ◆ **What will happen if we do only what we want?**
Sin will be in control, Gal. 5:19-21
- ◆ **When sin is in control, what kinds of things do we show?**
The fruit of sin: hatred, jealousy, anger, selfishness and greed, Gal. 5:19-21
- ◆ **What does the Holy Spirit bring out of us when He is in control?**
The fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, Gal. 5:22-23

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

My Way or God's Way (Older Students)

- ◆ Before the session, write the following words on separate clothespins with a marker: *idolatry, hatred, jealousy, anger, selfishness, violence and joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, self-control*. Put the clothespins in a bag or bucket. Prepare two posters that read *Sin's Way* and *God's Way*. Attach the posters to a wall. Distribute Bibles and guide the class to open to Galatians 5. Encourage them to use the table of contents if they need help. Remind them that Galatians is one of Paul's letters, and it is found in the New Testament. When everyone has found it, allow students to take turns pulling a clothespin and reading the word. Discuss what the verses mean as a class, give an example of someone showing that action and then decide if the word describes *Sin's Way* or *God's Way*. The student who pulled the clothespin should clip it to the corresponding poster. The class may refer to Galatians 5:19-23 to check their work.

Fruit Pairs (Older Students)

- ◆ Before the session, write the fruit of the Spirit on separate craft sticks: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*. Make two sets. Prepare additional sticks if you have a large group. Each student will need one craft stick. Mix up the sticks and scatter them across the floor. When you say “go,” the students should each collect one stick, then find another person with the same stick. Call on one or two pairs to give an example of how they might see the fruit in their lives. [For example, *patience might be shown by waiting without complaining for a sibling to get ready to go somewhere.*] Collect and scatter the sticks again to play additional rounds as time allows.
- ◆ All of these things are the fruit of the Spirit. They are evidence that God is at work in our lives. The Holy Spirit changes the way we think and act to be more like Jesus. We can love others because Jesus loves us. We can have peace because Jesus has won the war against sin and death. We can be patient with others because God is patient with us.

Fruit of the Spirit Key Tags (Older Students)

- ◆ Before the session, cut cardstock or index cards into 1x3-inch strips, 10 per student. Punch a hole toward the end of each strip. Encourage students to open their Bibles to *Galatians 5:22–23*. Distribute 10 tags to each student and direct them to write the fruit of the Spirit on separate tags. On the last tag, they should write *Galatians 5:22–23*. Consider covering the tags in packing tape to make them water-resistant. Encourage the class to keep their tags with them and watch to see how they see the fruit of the Spirit lived out in themselves or in other believers.
- ◆ Before a person trusts in Jesus, he is an enemy of God. But when he turns from his sin and trusts in Jesus, God forgives his sin and adopts him into His family. God loves us, takes care of us and changes us. The Holy Spirit changes the way we think and act to be more like Jesus. When we see things like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control in our lives, that is evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work to change our hearts and minds. Believers won’t be perfect in this life, but we can honor God with our lives as we trust in Him and do His work of sharing the gospel with the world.

Good Fruit, Bad Fruit (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ On a dry erase board or chalkboard, make a T-chart. Label the columns *Good Fruit* and *Bad Fruit*. Lead the class to discuss the thoughts and behaviors that would fall under each category. List their ideas in the appropriate columns. When students suggest a general trait, ask for a specific example of what that might look like.
- ◆ When we believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit begins working in our lives. As we grow in our faith, our hearts will want what God wants. Over time our sinful habits will fall away, and our lives will be marked by godliness. The Holy Spirit will produce love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control in our lives.

Fill in the Blank (Younger Students)

- ◆ This is a version of Hangman. Before class, write the fruit of the Spirit on a dry erase board or large paper. Draw small lines representing every letter of one fruit of the Spirit. Then, draw nine pieces of fruit. Invite students to guess a letter. If the letter is in the word, write it in the correct spot. If it is not, erase a part of the picture [e.g., *a leaf from the tree*]. If the entire picture is erased,

the teacher wins. After they guess a word correctly, talk about what that fruit of the Spirit means. Give helpful hints [e.g., *start by guessing vowels*] before beginning the game. To increase the activity's difficulty, do not write out the nine words. Allow the class to guess from memory or look up Galatians 5:22–23 in their Bibles.

Fruit Tree Craft (Younger Students)

- ◆ Help the class complete this craft using the steps below:
 - ◆ Tear green and other colored tissue paper into bits.
 - ◆ Pour glue onto a paper plate for the students to share.
 - ◆ Draw the outline of a tree on a sheet of heavyweight paper.
 - ◆ Wrap a bit of tissue paper around the eraser end of a pencil. Dip the bit of tissue paper in glue and press it to the paper to create leaves (using the green) or fruit (using other colors).
 - ◆ Use brown construction paper to create the trunk of the tree.
 - ◆ Write out the main point on the bottom of the sheets: The Holy Spirit changes the way we think and act to be more like Jesus.
 - ◆ Set them aside to dry.
- ◆ When you look at this picture, you can remember that just as a fruit tree will bear fruit, a Christian will grow to be more like Jesus each day. The Holy Spirit gives us the power and the desire to obey God by living with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ Decision Tree (Older Students)
- ◆ Fruit Salad (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, help us to live Your way. Our sinful desire is to live for ourselves, but You alone deserve our love, worship and attention. Thank You for the Holy Spirit, who changes us so we can live out Your mission. Amen.

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- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FOR REVIEW ONLY

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Do you see any fruit of the Spirit in your family members? If so, what fruit?
- Talk about how you changed after becoming a believer.
- As unbelievers, sin controlled us. As believers, who is in control now?



THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

ACTS 13:13-14; GALATIANS 5:16-26

MAIN POINT: THE HOLY SPIRIT CHANGES THE WAY WE THINK AND ACT TO BE MORE LIKE JESUS.

Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in Galatia. Paul explained that God changes people who trust in Jesus. God gives them the Holy Spirit, who guides them and gives them power to become more like Jesus.

Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit changes the way we think and act. He wanted believers to know that if you let the Holy Spirit guide you, you will do what God wants instead of what you want.

When sin is in control, we do wrong things. We show hatred, jealousy, anger, selfishness and greed. We fight and get into trouble. People who live like this will not enter God's kingdom.

But Jesus frees us from the power of sin. His Holy Spirit lives in us and gives us power to do what is right. When the Holy Spirit is in control, people choose love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These actions are the fruit of the Spirit. This fruit pleases God.

The more we know Jesus, the more we will want to live to please God. Since the Holy Spirit lives in us, we must let the Holy Spirit guide us.

Jesus Connection: When we trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit begins to change us. Paul told the believers in the Galatian church how to recognize that God is working in someone's life. People who are saved by Jesus become more like Him, and the Holy Spirit gives them power to say no to sin and to live in a way that pleases God.

Key Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!



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FRUIT SCRAMBLE

Check out Galatians 5:22–23. Then, unscramble the fruit of the Spirit.

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PTIENCA

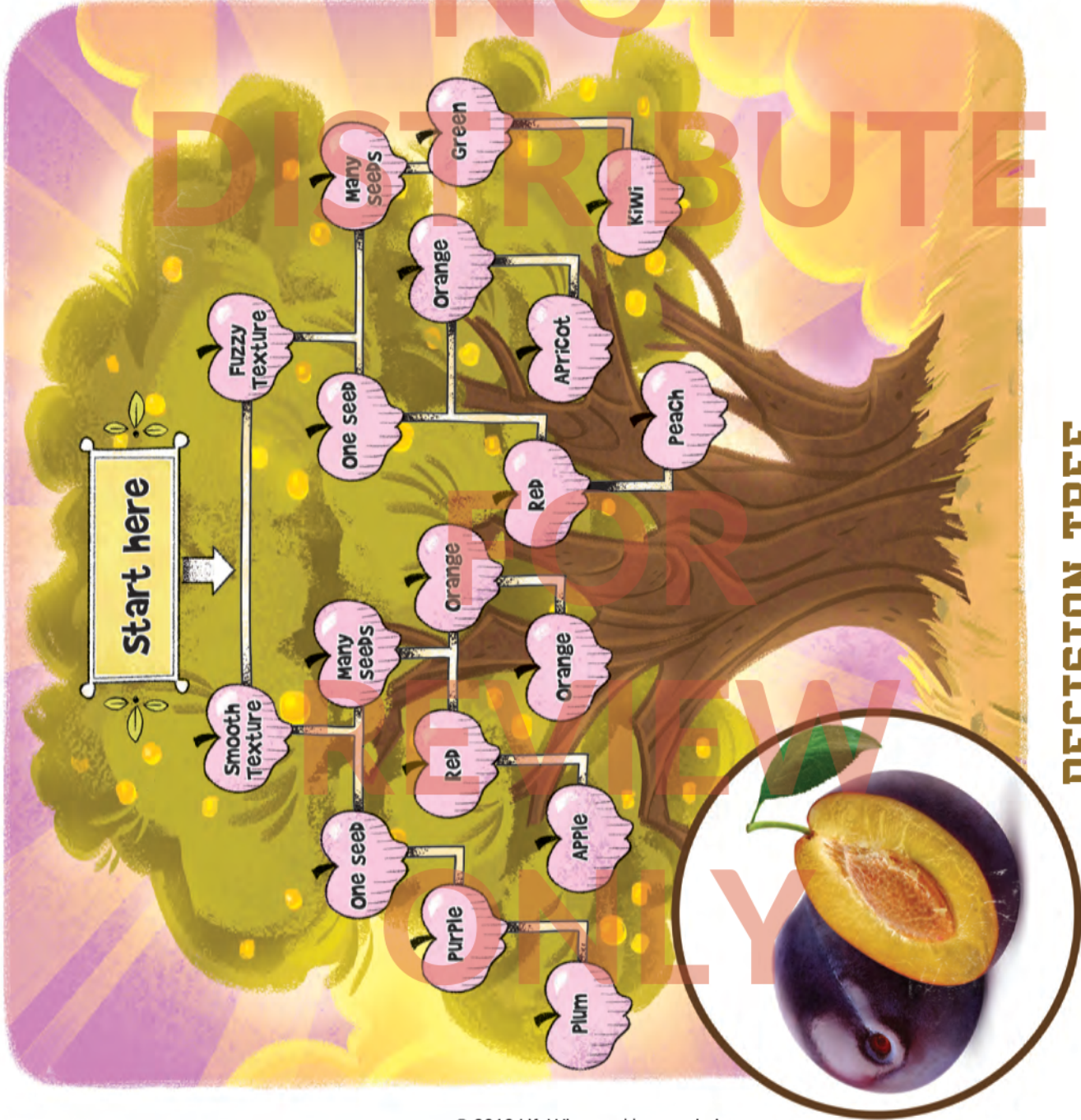
KNESINDS

GSEND00S

FFULHAITSENS

GLEENTESES

SLEF-COORTNL



DECISION TREE

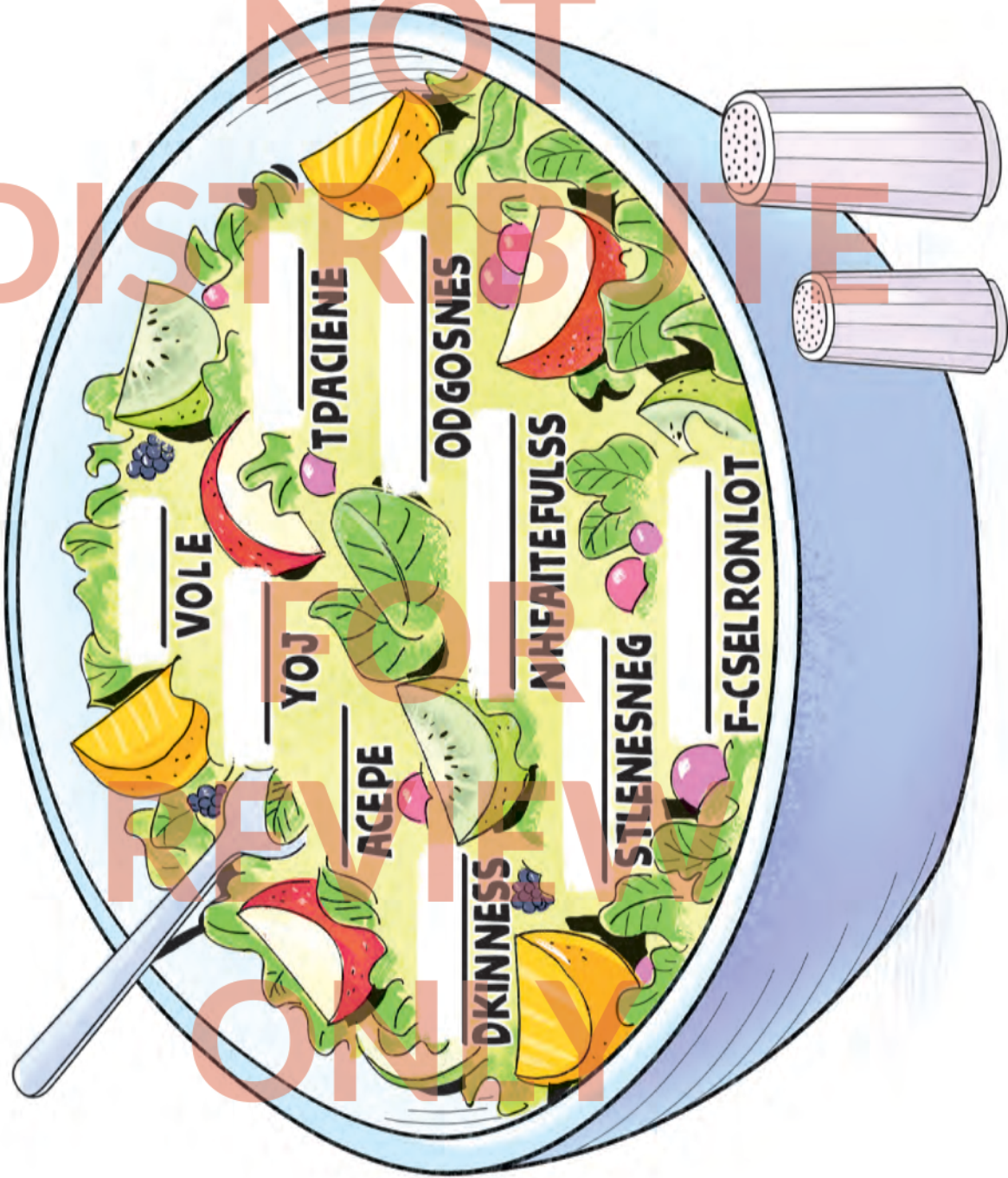
Look at the fruit. Then, use the decision tree to determine what type of tree the fruit came from. Circle the answer you find.

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FRUIT SALAD

INSTRUCTIONS: Unscramble each of the words below to learn what traits make up the fruit of the Spirit. Help kids look up Galatians 5:22 in their Bibles for hints as needed.



KEY PASSAGE:

2 Corinthians 5:17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.

BIBLE STORY:

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

- Paul wrote a letter to believers living in Galatia.
- Paul wanted the Galatians to know the changes following Jesus would produce in their lives.
- The Holy Spirit changes the way we think and act to be more like Jesus.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What are some ways we need to be more like Jesus?
- Do you think the Holy Spirit produces all the fruit in everyone?
- Which attribute from the fruit of the Spirit is easiest for you? Which is hardest?

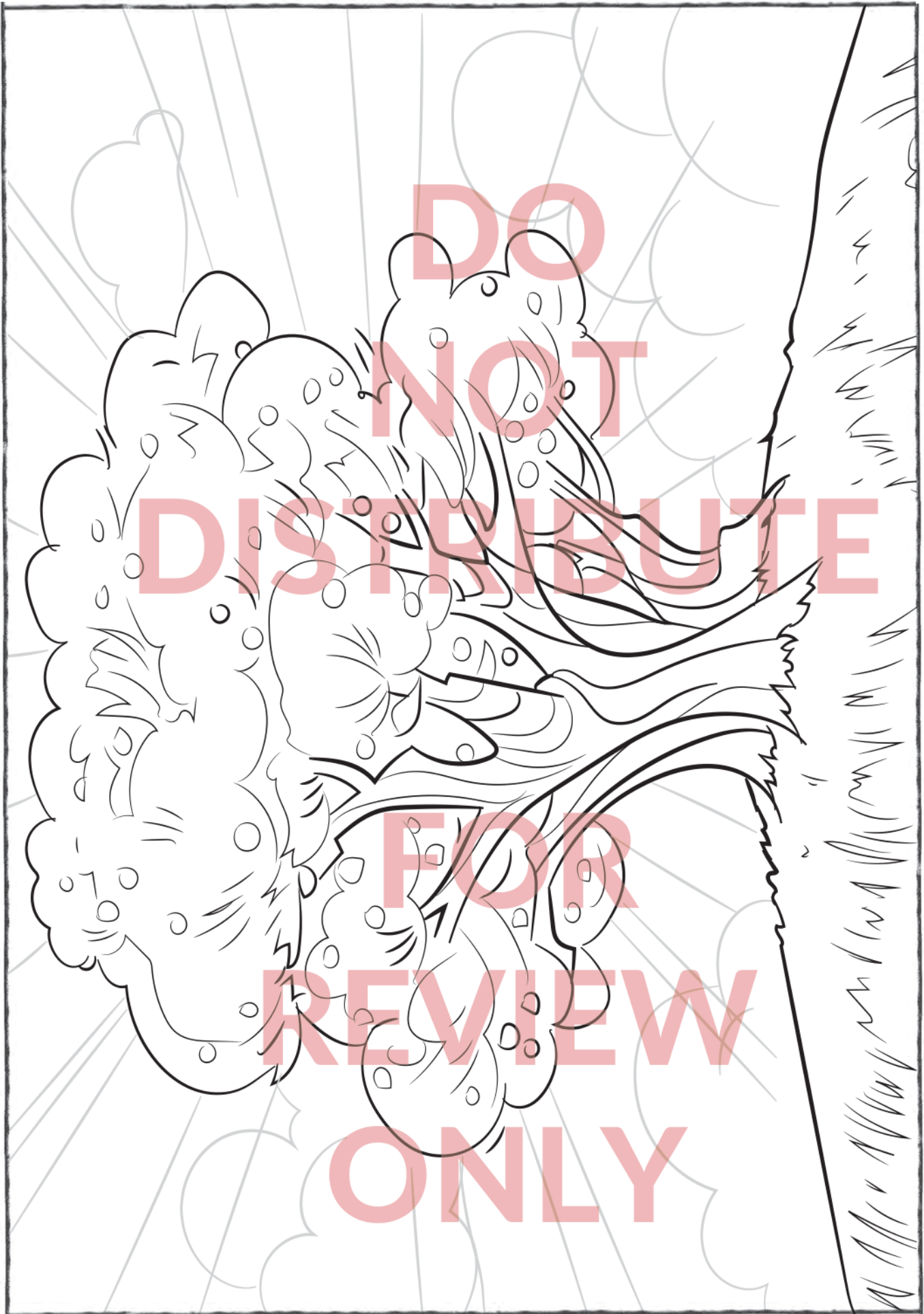
FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Research a kind of fruit that can grow where you live. Help your kids plant a seed and see if you can grow your own fruit.

The Fruit of the Spirit
L 109 | SELF-CONTROL

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THE HOLY SPIRIT CHANGES THE WAY WE
THINK AND ACT TO BE MORE LIKE JESUS.

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LESSON 110: STEWARDSHIP

THE ARMOR OF GOD

Acts 19; Ephesians 6:10–19



THE ARMOR OF GOD

- ♦ Acts 19; Ephesians 6:10–19
- ♦ Big Picture Q&A: Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.
- ♦ Key Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!



JESUS CONNECTION

Paul told believers to be ready to fight a spiritual battle each and every day. People and powers who are against God will be against us too. But Jesus died and rose from the dead. He had victory over evil. We can fight the battle against evil, knowing Jesus already won the war.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

STEWARDSHIP – Using the gifts God has given me wisely without wasting them.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Paul knew that following Jesus is difficult. After Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, his life was turned upside down, and he was never the same. Paul spent the rest of his life struggling and suffering to advance the very gospel that he had denied and fought against before his conversion.

Paul was in prison when he wrote his letter to the believers at the church in Ephesus. Paul knew firsthand that the life of a believer is a battle—an ongoing fight. But Paul didn't see life as a fight against the Romans, those who had thrown him in prison, or those who opposed the gospel. The battle is against evil.

At the conclusion of his letter, Paul used a Roman soldier's armor as a picture of how we are to prepare ourselves to fight the battle against evil. Believers are to carry God's truth, righteousness and peace wherever we go. Likewise, we are to hold fast to our faith, salvation and the Word of God. When we are fully protected by this armor of God, we are ready for any battle.

In addition to wearing the armor of God, Paul called on believers to pray at all times. Paul wanted to remind believers that even with the armor of God, we still need to rely on God to protect us and to win the fight against evil.

This week, show your students all that God has given them to help them fight against evil. Emphasize that God never intends for us to fight in our own power. We are to rely on His power. Be sure to also explain that while life can be difficult and we are to be ready to fight against evil, we can have complete confidence that we will be victorious because, by His death and resurrection, Jesus has already won the war.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

The New Testament letters we have been learning about teach us how we are saved from sin. The Galatians were confused, but Paul told them that only by what could they be saved? (*Faith in Jesus.*) The letters also remind us that God changes people when they trust in Jesus. What does the Holy Spirit change to help us be more like Jesus? (*How we think and act.*) What does God's Spirit grow within us to show that we are true believers? (*The fruit of the Spirit.*) Can you name any of the fruit of the Spirit? [*Take answers.*] Today's Bible story is about the armor God gives to us. Christians are involved in a battle, but not against other people. Our battle is against the forces of evil. Our story today is called "The Armor of God."

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Dressed and Ready (Older Students)

- ♦ Arrange chairs in a circle and instruct the class to be seated. Give each student a piece of outerwear. Stand outside the circle and explain that you will name a destination. If students are holding a piece of clothing that would be good to wear in that destination, they should stand up and switch seats with another player who is standing. Call out destinations one at a time, giving students a chance to react. [Examples: beach, garden, North Pole, park, mountain, etc.]
- ♦ That was fun. What kinds of things would you put on to go to a battle? We'll find out when we hear today's Bible story.

Draw Armor (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Form two groups: boys and girls. Give each group a large piece of paper and allow a volunteer from each group to draw an outline of a person on the paper. Call out the following phrases, allowing time between each for the groups to add them to their drawing: *belt, breastplate covering the chest, sandals, shield, helmet and sword*. Allow each group to display their drawings and point out each piece of armor.
- ♦ The Bible says God gives us armor to protect us. We'll find out more in our Bible story today.

Armor Toss (Younger Students)

- ♦ Print each picture of the armor of God using the "Armor Toss" printable. Place them on the floor as though building a suit of armor. Instruct the students to line up and take turns tossing a beanbag onto the pieces of armor. Each time a student lands the beanbag on a piece, say its name aloud. Encourage the class to say it with you.
- ♦ Today, we will learn about these pieces of armor. They are a special kind of armor that God gives us to help us stand firm against anyone who is against God and fight back against evil.

Safety Gear Show-and-Tell (Younger Students)

- ♦ Bring in various pieces of protective gear, such as a bike helmet, oven mitts, sunglasses, safety goggles, gardening gloves, etc. Show each piece and let the class try them on and examine them closely. Discuss what each piece is designed to do and situations where you might use it.
- ♦ Each of these things is made to protect you from something that could hurt you. Even though each item has a use, none of those items can protect us from spiritual dangers. That's why God provides a special kind of armor. Today, we will learn more about the armor of God.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

Flip Cards (Older Students)

- ♦ Print the “Key Passage Flip Cards” double-sided, one for each student, and cut them apart. Encourage the class to fold their card in half so they see only one level at a time. On each level, students will fill in missing words to complete the key passage. After completing a level, they can turn the card over or fold it the other way to see the next level, where increasingly more words will be missing. Memorizing Scripture is kind of like making sure we have easy access to our swords for spiritual battles. Paul said that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. When we have key passages memorized, we can pull out our swords to fight spiritual battles with ease.

High, Low, Fast, Slow (Younger Students)

- ♦ Display the key passage poster and read it aloud together. Challenge the class to read the key passage in various ways: whispering, shouting, quickly, slowly, etc. We can memorize our key passage to remember that when we trust in Jesus, we are not the same. Our old way of living as a slave to sin has died, and Jesus makes us alive so we can live for Him.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Who changes us?

A: *The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

The Armor of God | Acts 19; Ephesians 6:10–19

On Paul's third missionary journey, he traveled to Ephesus, a major trade city for the Roman Empire, in modern-day Turkey. Paul stayed in Ephesus for about three years. **While there, Paul shared the good news about Jesus. God did many miracles through Paul, and many people, both Jews and Gentiles, believed in Jesus and repented of their sins. Some who were once involved in evil magic and worship of Satan chose to worship God instead.**

Later, Paul wrote a letter to the Ephesians to remind them about every good thing they had been given in Christ and how they could live God's way in a very dark place. He told them: “Be strong! God is all-powerful, and He will give you the strength you need.”

Paul knew from experience that the Christian life was not an easy life. In fact, he wrote this letter while he was in prison in Rome. Paul told the Ephesians that the Christian life is like a battle. It is difficult, and it is not a battle against other people. The battle is against evil.

But, Paul also told believers how to fight in this battle. Evil is strong, but God is stronger and gives us what we need to stand strong against evil. “Put on the full armor of God,” he said. “It will help you stand up against the Devil, who is trying to trick you.” These are the pieces of God's armor, Paul said:

First, truth is like a belt around our waist. We know what is true because God has told us about Himself in His Word. Truth can stand up against lies.

Second, righteousness is like armor on our chest. God makes us righteous when we trust in Jesus.

Righteousness means that we are now right with God. When we trust in Jesus' death on the cross to save us from sin, God declares that we are no longer guilty of sin and far away from Him. He now welcomes us as His friends and gives us the strength to do what is right.

Third, Paul said, "Be ready with the gospel—like sandals on your feet." What God has done for us in Jesus is good news! **We must always be ready to tell others the gospel.**

Fourth, faith is like a shield. We should take it with us wherever we go to help protect ourselves from the evil one's attacks. This evil one—the devil—wants us to doubt God or believe what is not true. God gives us faith to help us trust in Him and obey Him.

Finally, Paul said, "Salvation is like your helmet, and God's Word is like your sword." The helmet protects our head and mind. We must remember that God has saved us. A sword helps us fight off enemies. God's Word, the Bible, is a strong sword! The Bible tells us what is true and the Holy Spirit helps us do what it says.

When we use this armor, we must remember to pray. God will show us how to be ready and how to live for Him. Paul said, "Don't give up praying for God's people." Paul wanted the Ephesians to pray for him too, that God would help him be bold when he shared the good news about Jesus.

JESUS CONNECTION



Paul told believers to be ready to fight a spiritual battle each and every day.

People and powers who are against God will be against us too. But Jesus died and rose from the dead. He had victory over evil. We can fight the battle against evil, knowing Jesus already won the war.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

STEWARDSHIP – Using the gifts God has given me wisely, without wasting them.

Living LifeWise

God provides for all our needs, and we can choose to be good stewards of His gifts.

Character Connection

Stewardship means that we use whatever we have wisely, practicing it even when we'd rather do something else, so that it's ready when we need it. It's important for school and music and sports, and it's important for doing life God's way, too.

God has provided everything we need for every situation. He's given us food, clothes, people who care for us and purpose in life. He's given us salvation and forgiveness because of Jesus' death on the cross. He's given us the Holy Spirit. He's even given us the encouragement and armor we need to fight against sin and evil.

But just because we have what we need doesn't mean we're always ready to go. We have to practice doing the things that help us live God's way. We have to be good stewards. That means choosing to pray and

read our Bibles. It means putting on the spiritual armor Paul describes. It means asking the Spirit to help us live ready to obey God, every day.

Let's brainstorm which one (or more than one) of the pieces of God's armor could help us in these situations.

- ◆ You are worried about the big test coming up. (*Shield of faith, sword of Spirit*)
- ◆ A friend on the bus asks you what you learn about at LifeWise. (*Ready feet*)
- ◆ The teacher asks if you know what was going on in the bathroom after recess. (*Belt of truth*)
- ◆ You realize you can see another student's test paper and are tempted to copy their answers. (*Breastplate of righteousness*)

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ What does the armor of God help us do?
Resist evil and stand firm in faith, Eph. 6:13
- ◆ What did Paul compare to a helmet?
Salvation, Eph. 6:17
- ◆ What does the helmet of salvation protect?
Our mind, Eph. 6:17
- ◆ What does the shield of faith allow us to do?
Put out the flaming arrows of the evil one, Eph. 6:16
- ◆ What is like a belt around our waist?
Truth, Eph. 6:14
- ◆ What is like armor on our chest?
Righteousness, Eph. 6:14
- ◆ What does the word *righteousness* mean?
Being right with God
- ◆ What is the sword of the Spirit?
The Word of God, Eph. 6:17
- ◆ Besides putting on the armor of God, what did Paul tell the church to do?
Pray at all times in the Spirit, Eph. 6:18
- ◆ Why don't we **have to be afraid of the devil**?
Jesus has already won the war against sin by dying on the cross
- ◆ How do we put on the armor of God?
By knowing, believing and obeying God's Word

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Armor Concentration (Older Students)

- ◆ Print the "Armor Cards" printable, one set for every 2-4 students. Make sure to display the correct matches, or the students can look at a Bible to find the correct match. The following words should be matched together: *belt/truth, breastplate/righteousness, shoes/readiness to share the gospel,*

shield/faith, helmet/salvation, sword/God's Word and prayer/protection for believers. Instruct students to position the cards face down in a grid. In each group, players will take turns turning over two cards at a time. If the cards match, they should collect them and take another turn. If the cards do not match, they should turn over both cards. Play passes to the next player. The player to collect the most matches wins.

- ◆ God tells us the battles we will fight are not physical; they are spiritual battles against an invisible enemy. The devil wants us to turn away from God. He does not want people to know and love Jesus. But God gives us what we need to stand strong against evil. We stand firm knowing that God will protect us, and we rely on His power. Ultimately, Jesus has won the war against sin and evil by dying on the cross and rising again. His victory belongs to everyone who trusts Him.

Armor of God Trivia (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Remind students that there are 66 books in the Bible divided between the Old Testament and New Testament. Explain that each testament contains several divisions. The book of Ephesians is found in the division called Paul's Letters.
- ◆ Form two teams. Alternate back and forth, asking each team Bible review questions. Players will work together to answer the questions correctly. Each time a team answers correctly, they earn a piece of the armor. If a team answers incorrectly, allow the opposing team to answer and earn the piece of armor. You may choose to draw the pieces on a board, keep track using tally marks or hand them physical armor. The team to collect the most parts of the armor of God wins.

Armor of God Match (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Print one "Armor Cards" printable. Cut out the words with the name of each piece of the armor of God: *salvation, righteousness, faith, truth, readiness to share the gospel, the Word of God*. Place the Bible story picture on a focal wall or white board. Work together as a class to label the armor of God with the correct name.
- ◆ We learned today that God gives us what we need to stand strong against evil. That means that we have the equipment and the power to fight back when the enemy tries to tempt us to sin or discourage us from sharing the gospel.

Shields of Faith (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Provide cake rounds or poster board cut into 10- or 12-inch circles, one per student. Allow the class to use markers or crayons to decorate their shields. As they work, discuss what types of battles they might face in their lives. Remind them that the battles believers face are not just physical battles, but spiritual battles against evil and the enemies of God. We might use the armor of God to fight off lies about God or about ourselves, to fight temptation to sin, to help us share the gospel with others, to remember the truth about God and to fight for peace and courage. When they finish, help students stick together two lengths of duct tape, sticky sides in. Use two additional strips of tape to attach the tape loop to the back of the shield as a handle.
- ◆ God gives us what we need to stand strong against evil. He gives us special armor and strength. We can pray, and we can memorize God's Word so we will be ready for battle. No matter what we face, we know that victory belongs to Jesus. He won the war against sin and death by dying on the cross and rising from the dead. Everyone who trusts in Him will have ultimate victory too.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ Ready to Fight (Older Students)
- ◆ Protective Pairings (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Father, thank You for Your goodness, faithfulness and love. Help us to put on the full armor of God each day. Fill us with Your Spirit and guide us to fight the good fight, to pray at all times and be ready to share the gospel with others. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FOR REVIEW ONLY

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What does the Bible say our Christian battle is against? (See Ephesians 6:12.)
- What does God give us to stand strong against evil?
- How can we remember what is true about God and about ourselves?



THE ARMOR OF GOD

ACTS 19: EPHESIANS 6:10-19

MAIN POINT: GOD GIVES US WHAT WE NEED
TO STAND STRONG AGAINST EVIL.

"Be strong! God is strong, and He will give you strength." Paul wrote these words in a letter to the church at Ephesus. Paul was in prison in Rome, and he knew from experience that the Christian life was not an easy life. In fact, the Christian life is like a battle. The battle is against evil.

Paul told believers how to fight. "Put on the full armor of God," he said. "It will help you stand up against the devil, who is trying to trick you."

Evil is strong, but God is stronger. These are the pieces of God's armor:

First, truth is like a belt around our waist. We know what is true because God has told us about Himself in His Word.

Second, righteousness is like armor on our chest. God gives us righteousness when we trust in Jesus.

Third, Paul said, "Be ready with the gospel—like sandals on your feet." We must always be ready to tell others the gospel.

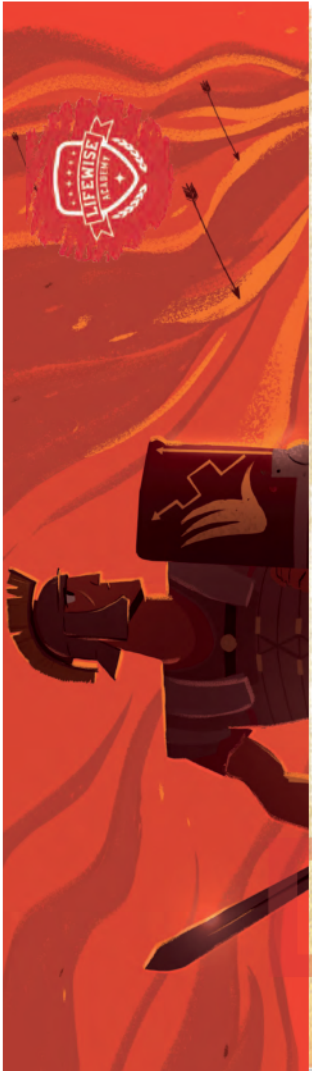
Fourth, faith is like a shield. We should take it with us wherever we go to help protect ourselves from the evil one's attacks. This evil one—the devil—wants us to doubt God or believe what is not true. God gives us faith to help us trust in Him and obey Him.

Finally, Paul said, "Salvation is like your helmet, and God's Word is like your sword." A helmet protects your head. We should remember that God has saved us. A sword helps us fight off enemies. God's Word, the Bible, is a strong sword! The Bible tells us what is true and the Holy Spirit helps us do what it says.

When we use this armor, we must remember to pray. God will show us how to be ready and how to live for Him.

Jesus Connection: Paul told believers to be ready to fight a spiritual battle each and every day. People and powers who are against God will be against us too. But Jesus died and rose from the dead. He had victory over evil. We can fight the battle against evil, knowing Jesus already won the war.

Key Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!



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READY TO FIGHT

Use the key to decode what kind of battle believers need to be ready to fight.



THE ARMOR OF GOD

Look up each Scripture reference and write how Paul describes each piece of the full armor of God.

EPHESIANS 6:17:

EPHESIANS 6:14:

EPHESIANS 6:16:

EPHESIANS 6:17:

EPHESIANS 6:14:

EPHESIANS 6:15:

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PROTECTIVE PAIRINGS

INSTRUCTIONS: Match each person to the object that helps protect him or her.



KEY PASSAGE:

2 Corinthians 5:17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.

BIBLE STORY:

THE ARMOR OF GOD

- Paul wrote a letter to believers living in Ephesus.
- Paul wanted them to know that they had power against evil.
- Paul talked about a special kind of armor.
- God gives us what we need to stand strong against evil.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

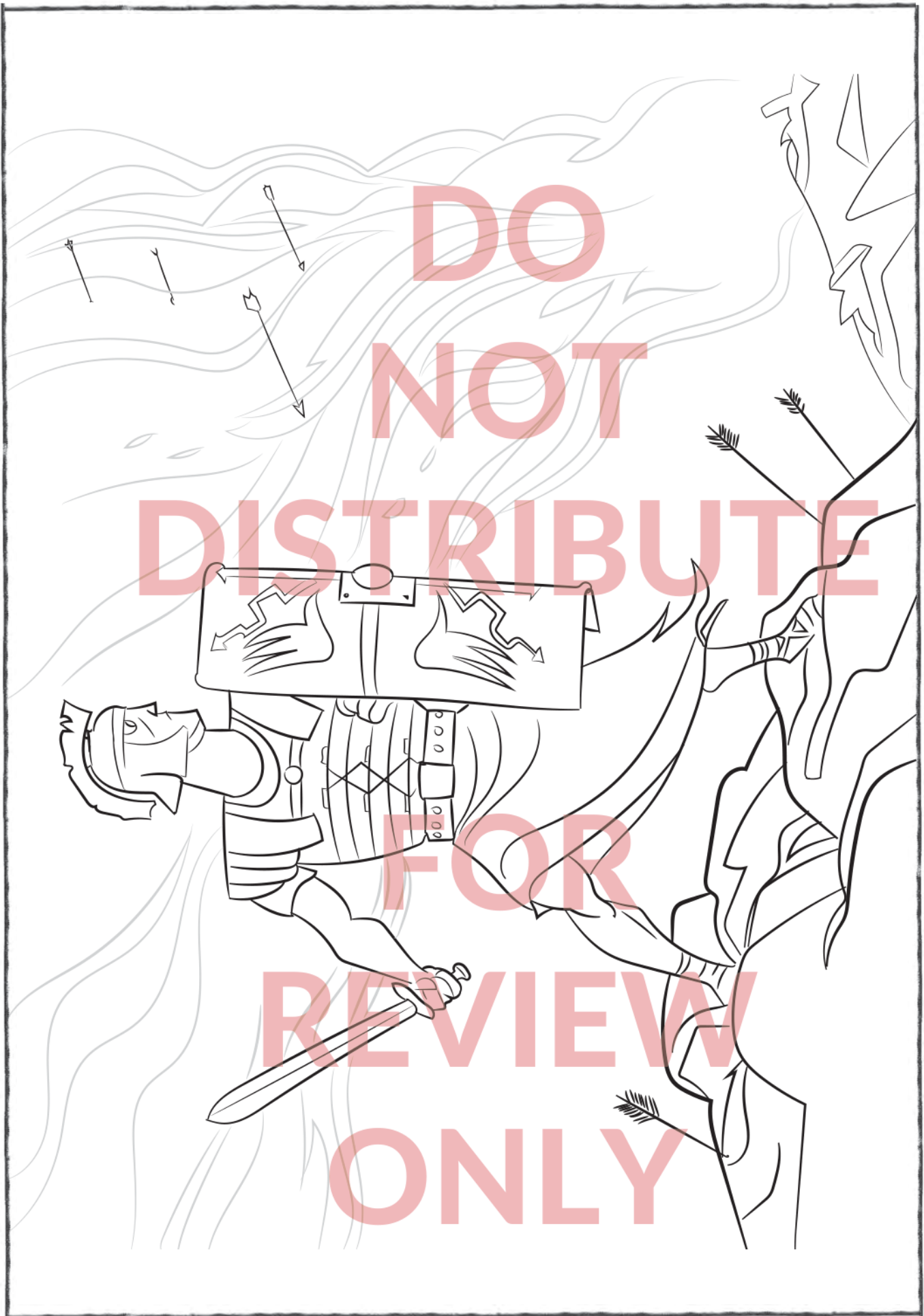
- Why do you think the armor of God includes a sword?
- What does it mean to wear the armor of God?
- Can we choose not to wear the armor of God?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Take your family to a history museum. Seek out exhibits about armor. Talk to your kids about the kinds of threats God's armor protects us from.
- Use wire coat hangers and papier-mâché to make play swords.

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GOD GIVES US WHAT WE NEED TO
STAND STRONG AGAINST EVIL.

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2 Corinthians 5:17 (CSB)

and see, the _____ has come!

If _____ is in _____, he is a new
_____ ; the _____ has passed _____ ,

(CSB)

If _____ is in _____, he is a new
_____ ; the _____ has passed _____ ,
and see, the _____ has come!

2 Corinthians 5:17 (CSB)

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RIGHTEOUSNESS
SHIELD
HELMET
FAITH
SALVATION
BREASTPLATE

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BELT

WORD OF GOD

SWORD

SANDALS

TRUTH

READINESS TO SHARE THE GOSPEL

Armor Cards

Instructions: Print and cut apart. Use as directed in the leader guide.
L 110 The Armor of God | STEWARDSHIP

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PRAYER

REVIEW

ONLY

PROTECTION

FOR

BELIEVERS

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Belt of Truth

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Armor Toss

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.
L 110 The Armor of God | STEWARDSHIP

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Helmet of Salvation



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Sandals of Readiness for the Gospel



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Shield of Faith



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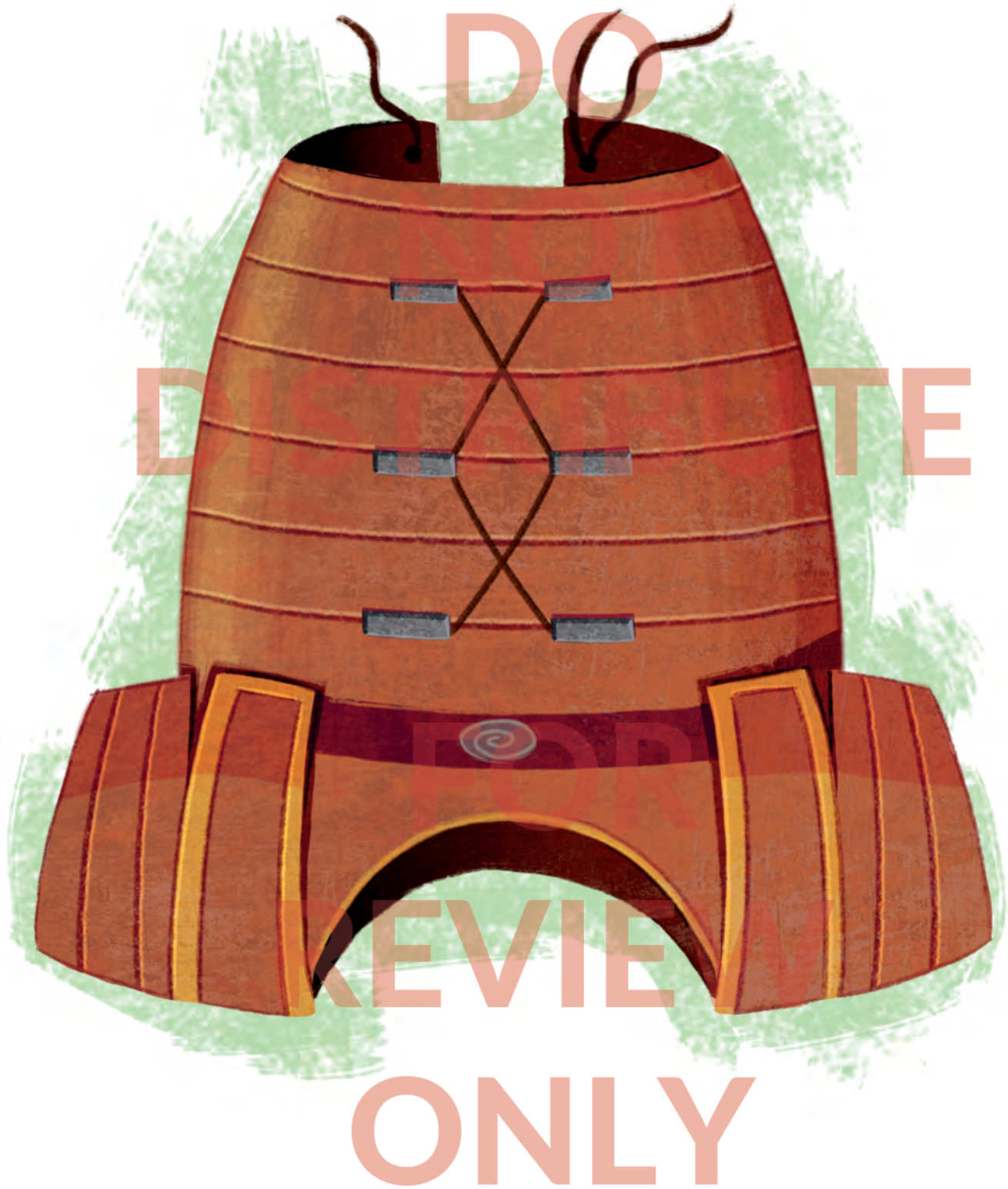
Sword of the Spirit



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Breastplate of Righteousness



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LESSON 111: COURAGE

THE PLAN TO STOP PAUL

Acts 21:26–23:35



THE PLAN TO STOP PAUL

- ♦ Acts 21:26–23:35
- ♦ Big Picture Q&A: When should we tell others about Jesus? We should always tell others about Jesus, even when it is difficult.
- ♦ Key Passage: Philippians 1:27a – Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.



JESUS CONNECTION

Even when others threatened his life, Paul continued to obey Jesus. He believed that God, who showed His love for the world by sending His Son to die on the cross and rise again, would help him through hard times. We too can risk everything to share the gospel with courage because we know that God loves us and will care for us.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

COURAGE – Boldly doing the right thing, even when it's hard.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

As Paul's third missionary journey came to an end, a prophet named Agabus warned him that the Jews would seize him in Jerusalem and hand him over to the Gentiles (see Acts 21:10–11). But Paul did not hesitate. He returned to Jerusalem and was seized by a group of Jews who wanted to kill him because he taught things contrary to their law.

The Roman soldiers nearby saw the commotion and stepped in, taking Paul into Roman custody. Now Paul was in Gentile hands. Paul remained under Roman protection and was staying in the barracks when the Lord gave him a message: "Have courage! For as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so it is necessary for you to testify in Rome" (Acts 23:11).

What a comforting message for Paul! The sovereign Lord told Paul his future: You're going to Rome. Paul wasn't exactly sure how he was going to get to Rome, but he could trust that God was working all things together for that purpose.

The next morning, Paul's nephew uncovered a plot to kill Paul and reported it to the Roman army commander. The commander arranged for Paul to go to Caesarea, where he would be safe.

In this Bible story, we see God using human means to bring about His end. Even when others threatened his life, Paul trusted that God is faithful. He believed that God, who showed His love for the world by sending Jesus to die on the cross and rise again, would help him through hard times.

We too can risk everything to share the gospel with courage because we know that God loves us and will care for us. God calls us to be obedient and faithful as we take part in His greater plan to show His glory to us and through us for the fame of His name.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Last time we learned about the special armor that God gives to each believer for protection. Can you name any of the pieces? (*The helmet of salvation, breastplate of righteousness, shield of faith, belt of truth, feet ready to share the gospel and sword of the Word of God.*) What kind of battles does God tell us we will fight as disciples of Jesus? (*Spiritual battles.*) Why don't we have to be afraid of these battles coming? (*God gives us the strength to fight each battle.*)

During the next few lessons, we're going to learn more about God's plan for a believer named Paul. Paul lived at the same time as Jesus, and he had been a Pharisee, one of the religious leaders of the day. At first, he hated Christians and wanted to throw them all in prison! But one day, after Jesus had been raised from the dead and went into Heaven, Jesus met Paul on the road. Paul became a Christian, and from then on Paul wanted to share the good news about Jesus with as many people as he could. He went on three missionary journeys sharing the gospel in many places with Jews and Gentiles. But not everyone liked Paul's message. Today's lesson is called, "The Plan to Stop Paul."

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Switch Game (Younger and Older Students)

- ◆ Set up four cones or laminated paper squares to form a large square. Position an additional cone in the middle. One player should stand next to each cone. The player at the middle cone will call out, "Switch!" All players must find a new cone to stand next to. If two players meet at a cone, they should play Rock, Paper, Scissors to determine which one may stay at the cone. The player not standing at a cone is out. Have a new player from the sidelines come in and join the group each time a player is out. If your group is large, set up multiple squares if there is room or divide into groups and play one group at a time while the other groups do a sit-down activity.
- ◆ Each round, you planned to move to another cone. Sometimes another player stopped you by moving to the same cone. Today's Bible story is about a plan some people made to stop Paul from telling people about Jesus. Let's find out what happened.

Dots and Boxes (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Instruct the class to form pairs. Give each pair a piece of paper and two markers of different colors. Demonstrate how to draw a grid of 3-by-3 or 4-by-4 dots. Players will take turns joining two neighboring dots with a horizontal or vertical line. When a player completes the fourth side of a box, she should write her initials in the boxes and draw another line. The player to complete the most boxes wins.
- ◆ Was it hard to stop your partner from winning? Today's Bible story is about a plan to stop Paul. Did God let this evil plan stop Him? Let's find out.

Scribble Pictures (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Ask the class to sit in a circle, around a table if possible. Provide each student with a piece of paper and a pencil. Instruct the class to make a quick squiggle or scribble shape on their paper, then pass

it to their left. Instruct them to create a picture on the scribbled-on paper and incorporate the scribbled shape into their drawing somehow.

- ♦ At first, it might have looked like we were ruining perfectly good paper by scribbling on it, but when you passed the paper each of you found a way to turn someone's mess into a new picture. Today, we will learn about a man named Paul and hear what God did to make his life beautiful, even in the midst of messy situations.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Philippians 1:27a

Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Key Passage Echo (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Write the key passage on a chalkboard or dry erase board. Divide the passage into four sections. Form two groups of students: group A and group B. As you say each section, group A will echo you loudly, then group B will echo quietly. If time allows, have the groups switch parts and repeat. Paul wanted to honor Christ above everything else. Making Jesus known was even more important to Paul than his own life! He knew that there's nothing better than knowing Jesus and having a relationship with Him, and Paul wanted to share this news with others.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: When should we tell others about Jesus?

A: We should always tell others about Jesus even when it is difficult.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

The Plan to Stop Paul | Acts 21:26–23:35

The apostle Paul told people the good news about Jesus wherever he went. When he returned to Jerusalem, the believers were glad to see him. But many Jews did not like that Paul taught people they don't have to follow Jewish rules to be saved. So these Jews made a plan to stop Paul.

Paul was at the temple when a group of Jews from Asia saw him. They accused him of teaching what was against Jewish law and bringing a Gentile, or non-Jew, into the temple courtyard. A crowd dragged Paul away and tried to kill him. But a Roman official came and stopped them. The official allowed Paul to speak to the crowd. The crowd listened as Paul shared about his life before and after he met Jesus, but as he continued, they became so angry that the Roman official arrested Paul. Paul was taken to the Sanhedrin, a powerful group of Jewish priests and other leaders. Their job was to decide if a person had broken a Jewish law, and if so, to decide how that person should be punished.

Paul stood in front of the Sanhedrin and looked the men in the eyes. "Friends," he said. "I have done what God wants me to do. I do not believe I have done anything wrong." Paul explained that he had been arrested because he taught that Jesus was resurrected from the dead. The men in the Sanhedrin began arguing. Some of them thought Paul was right about the resurrection, and some thought he was wrong. The Roman soldiers took Paul away to keep him safe.

The next night, the Lord stood by Paul and gave him an incredible message: "Have courage!" He said. "You told about Me in Jerusalem. I want you to tell about Me in Rome, too."

In the morning, a group of Jews got together and made a plan to kill Paul. They promised to not eat or drink until Paul was dead. These men told the Jewish leaders about their plan. Paul's nephew overheard this evil plan. He hurried to tell Paul what was going on. Paul told his nephew to report it to the commander.

The army commander said, "Don't tell anyone that you told me about this plan." Then, the commander told two of his officers to get together a large group of soldiers and horses. They brought a horse for Paul to ride on, and that night, the soldiers took Paul to Caesarea to see the governor.

JESUS CONNECTION



Even when others threatened his life, Paul continued to obey Jesus. He believed that God, who showed His love for the world by sending His Son to die on the cross and rise again, would help him through hard times. We too can risk everything to share the gospel with courage because we know that God loves us and will care for us.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3-4 MIN)

COURAGE – Boldly doing the right thing, even when it's hard.

Living LifeWise

God loves and cares for us, so we can serve Him with courage.

Character Connection

We all have to do hard things, but we don't all think the same things are hard. You may not like talking in front of people, but I may struggle to take tests. Some people hate to be in charge of anything, and others want to be the quarterback of the team. What takes courage for me to do may be really easy for you, and vice versa.

It also takes courage to serve God. He can ask us to do some things that are very hard for us, like forgiving someone who was unkind to us or talking to someone about Jesus. But whenever God asks us to do something for Him, He also protects us, helps us, stays with us and gives us peace. Because we know He loves and takes care of us, we can have courage to serve God even when He asks us to do something hard.

Which option in each example demonstrates courage?

- ◆ A friend's family is struggling, and she's been sad at recess. Do you wait until tomorrow to ask her about it, or do you take a deep breath and ask how she is?
- ◆ A classmate invites you to an all-day birthday party, but it's on Sunday when your family goes to church. Do you ask your mom to let you skip church or do you miss the party this time?
- ◆ The teacher asks if you understand the math lesson. Do you say yes, even though you don't, or do you admit you need more help?

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ Who tried to have Paul killed?
Jewish leaders from Asia, Acts 21:27–30
- ◆ Whom was Paul brought to for questioning?
The religious leaders, Acts 23:1
- ◆ What was the message God gave Paul?
“Have courage! For as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so it is necessary for you to testify in Rome,” Acts 23:11
- ◆ Who made a plan to kill Paul?
A group of Jews, Acts 23:12
- ◆ What did the Jews promise not to do until they killed Paul?
Eat or drink, Acts 23:14
- ◆ Who overheard this evil plan?
Paul’s nephew, Acts 23:16
- ◆ What did the commander tell the young man after hearing the news?
“Don’t tell anyone you told me about this plan,” Acts 23:22
- ◆ What plan did the army commander put in place?
He gathered soldiers and horses to take Paul to see the governor by night, Acts 23:23–24

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Pray for Missionaries (Older Students)

- ◆ Before the session, collect some pictures or names of missionaries who are serving in different parts of the world. Form groups so that several students are sitting around an information sheet about each missionary. A *missionary* is a Christian called by God who obeys and goes to tell another group of people the good news about Jesus. Missionaries may face persecution and be hurt or even killed for sharing the gospel. Talk about what difficult things these missionaries may face as they share Jesus with others. Then, guide the students to pray for these missionaries, asking God to protect them and give them courage to honor Christ in all they do. Consider providing a copy of the missionary’s prayer cards to each student. Encourage the class to read the cards and pray for people in different countries. Pray for missionaries and other believers who are sharing the gospel in these places.
- ◆ When Paul was arrested, God protected him so he could preach about Jesus. Even today, missionaries risk their lives to tell others about Jesus. Let’s pray for them as they trust and obey Jesus.

Guess Who (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Review the different people in the Bible story by reading descriptive clues and allowing the class to guess whom the clue is about:
 - ◇ Clue #1: I taught people about Jesus wherever I went. I spoke in front of the religious leaders who wanted to kill me. (*Paul*)

- ❖ Clue #2: I overheard the Jews plotting to kill Paul, so I told the commander of the army to protect him. (*Paul's nephew*)
- ❖ Clue #3: I told Paul to have courage because I wanted him to teach about Jesus to people in Rome. (*God*)
- ❖ Clue #4: I wanted to kill Paul. He stood before me telling us about Jesus, but I don't believe that Jesus is really God's own Son. (*Jews/religious leader*)

True or False (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Tape a long piece of masking tape down the middle of the room. Instruct the class to stand on the line. Explain that you will read statements about the story. If the statement is true, the students will run to one side of the room, and if false, they will run to the other side.
 - ❖ The story of Paul was from the book of Luke. (*False; the book of Acts*)
 - ❖ Paul wanted to share the gospel with as many people as possible. (*True*)
 - ❖ Paul stood before the Sanhedrin to give a testimony. (*True, Acts 23:1*)
 - ❖ The religious leaders agreed with what Paul said. (*False; they started a riot, Acts 23:10*)
 - ❖ A group of 40 Jews vowed not to go swimming until they had killed Paul. (*False; not to eat or drink, Acts 23:12-13*)
 - ❖ Paul's niece heard about a plot to kill Paul and told the commander. (*False; Paul's nephew, Acts 23:16*)
 - ❖ The army commander sent a large group of soldiers to escort Paul to Caesarea to see the governor. (*True, Acts 23:23-24*)
 - ❖ God protected Paul so he could tell people how to follow God's laws. (*False; so he could preach about Jesus*)
 - ❖ We can share the good news of Jesus, even when it's difficult. (*True*)

Act It Out (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before class, gather any props needed to act out the story. Read the story using the bold words from the Bible story script. Assign the students parts; have them listen as you read the story and act out their part. If time allows, change roles and act out the story again.

The Gospel: God's Plan for Us (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Copy each symbol from the gospel poster onto a separate sheet of paper: crown, X, cross, gift, hands. Teach the students the motion for each symbol. After you have reviewed the five parts of the gospel plan, read the italicized descriptions one at a time and have the students do the motion as quickly as possible. Do all five parts several times randomly.
 - ❖ **Crown:** *God rules.* God is in charge of everything. [*Place imaginary crown on head*]
 - ❖ **X:** *We sinned.* Everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. [*Make an X shape with arms*]
 - ❖ **Cross:** *God provided His Son.* Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. [*Make a cross shape with arms*]
 - ❖ **Gift:** *Jesus gave His life for ours.* Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. [*Hold hands out, palms up*]
 - ❖ **Hands:** *We respond.* We can choose to turn away from sin and believe in Jesus. [*Kneel*]

- ◆ The gospel tells us the good news about Jesus. God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Jesus died on the cross to save people from sin, and He is alive. We can respond to the gospel by trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Paul risked a lot by talking about Jesus. Sharing the gospel can be a little scary. We can't predict who will accept it and who will reject it. Practicing what you will say and preparing to answer questions is a great way to be prepared to talk about Jesus. When should we tell others about Jesus? *(We should always tell others about Jesus, even when it is difficult.)*

Guest Speaker Testimony (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Invite a mature believer from the community to come share their testimony with the students. Have them share five to ten minutes depending on the age of the students and allow a few minutes for Q&A.
- ◆ A Christian is anyone who repents of their sin and believes that Jesus died on the cross to take our punishment for sin and rose from the dead on the third day. When a person makes a decision to trust Jesus to save them from sin, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside them and help them to live God's way, instead of living in sin. A person's testimony tells how they thought and lived before they trusted in Jesus, when and how they decided to trust Jesus and how the Holy Spirit has changed them since that time.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ Uncovered! (Older Students)
- ◆ Microscope Pictures (Younger Students)
 - ◇ Answers, clockwise: *elephant skin, soap bubbles, fly eye, pencil tip, baseball stitches*

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for Your great faithfulness to us, even when we do not deserve it. Thank You for promising to always be with us and for giving us strength and courage to do difficult things. Help us share the gospel with our friends and family this week. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FOR REVIEW ONLY

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why do you think some people oppose the gospel?
- What are you willing to risk to tell people about Jesus? Why?
- Can anything stop God's plan? (See Job 42:2.) How does that encourage you to trust and obey Him?



THE PLAN TO STOP PAUL

ACTS 21:26-23:35

MAIN POINT: WHEN PAUL WAS ARRESTED, GOD PROTECTED HIM SO HE COULD PREACH ABOUT JESUS.

The apostle Paul told people the good news about Jesus wherever he went. When he returned to Jerusalem, the believers were glad to see him. But many Jews did not like that Paul taught people they don't have to follow Jewish rules to be saved. So these Jews made a plan to stop Paul.

Paul was at the temple when a crowd of people dragged him away and tried to kill him. But a Roman official came and stopped them. This official arrested Paul and brought him to the Sanhedrin.

Paul stood in front of the Sanhedrin. "Friends," he said. "I do not believe I have done anything wrong." Paul explained that he had been arrested because he taught that Jesus was resurrected from the dead. The men in the Sanhedrin began arguing. The Roman soldiers took Paul away to keep him safe.

The next night, the Lord stood by Paul and gave him an incredible message: "Have courage!" He said. "You told about Me in Jerusalem. I want you to tell about Me in Rome, too."

In the morning, a group of Jews got together and made a plan to kill Paul. These men told the Jewish leaders about their plan.

Paul's nephew overheard this evil plan. He hurried to tell Paul what was going on. Paul told his nephew to report it to the commander.

The army commander told two of his officers to get together a large group of soldiers and horses. They brought a horse for Paul to ride on, and that night, the soldiers took Paul to Caesarea to see the governor.

Jesus Connection: Even when others threatened his life, Paul continued to obey Jesus. He believed that God, who showed His love for the world by sending His Son to die on the cross and rise again, would help him through hard times. We, too, can risk everything to share the gospel with courage because we know that God loves us and will care for us.

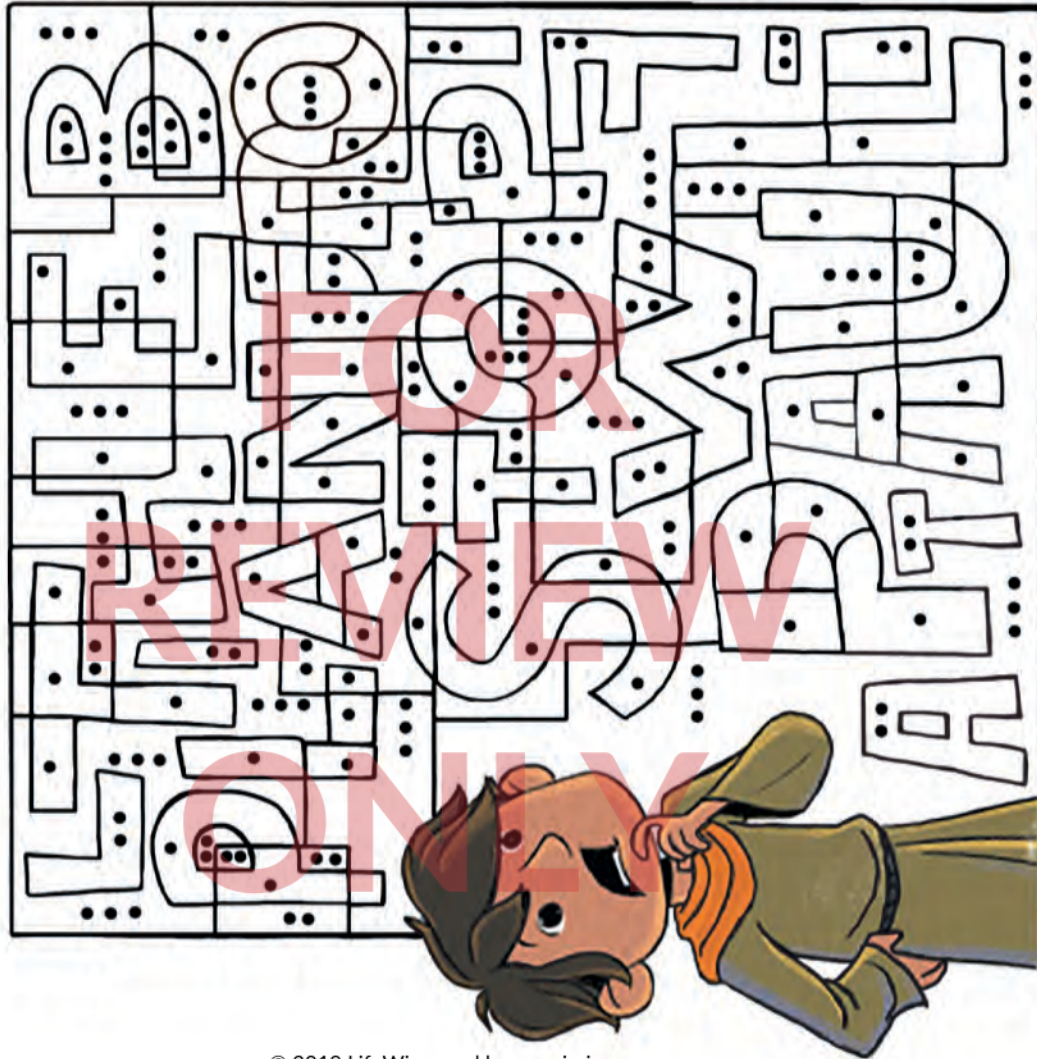
Key Passage: *Philippians 1:27a – Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.*

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UNCOVERED!

Use the key to color in the spaces and discover what a young boy uncovered in today's Bible story.



LIFEWISE
ACADEMY
✦ ✦ ✦

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SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Draw yourself into each scenario above. What would make it difficult to share the good news there? Could you do it? Why or why not?

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MICROSCOPE PICTURES

INSTRUCTIONS: The following pictures are zoomed in. Can you guess what each item is?



KEY PASSAGE:

Philippians 1:27a – Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- When should we tell others about Jesus? We should always tell others about Jesus, even when it is difficult.

BIBLE STORY:

THE PLAN TO STOP PAUL

- Paul preached the gospel.
- Religious leaders hated Paul for talking about Jesus.
- They decided to kill Paul to stop him from preaching.
- When Paul was arrested, God protected him so he could preach about Jesus.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- How do you think Paul felt when he was arrested?
- Do you ever feel afraid to speak about Jesus?
- Who can help us have courage to share the gospel?

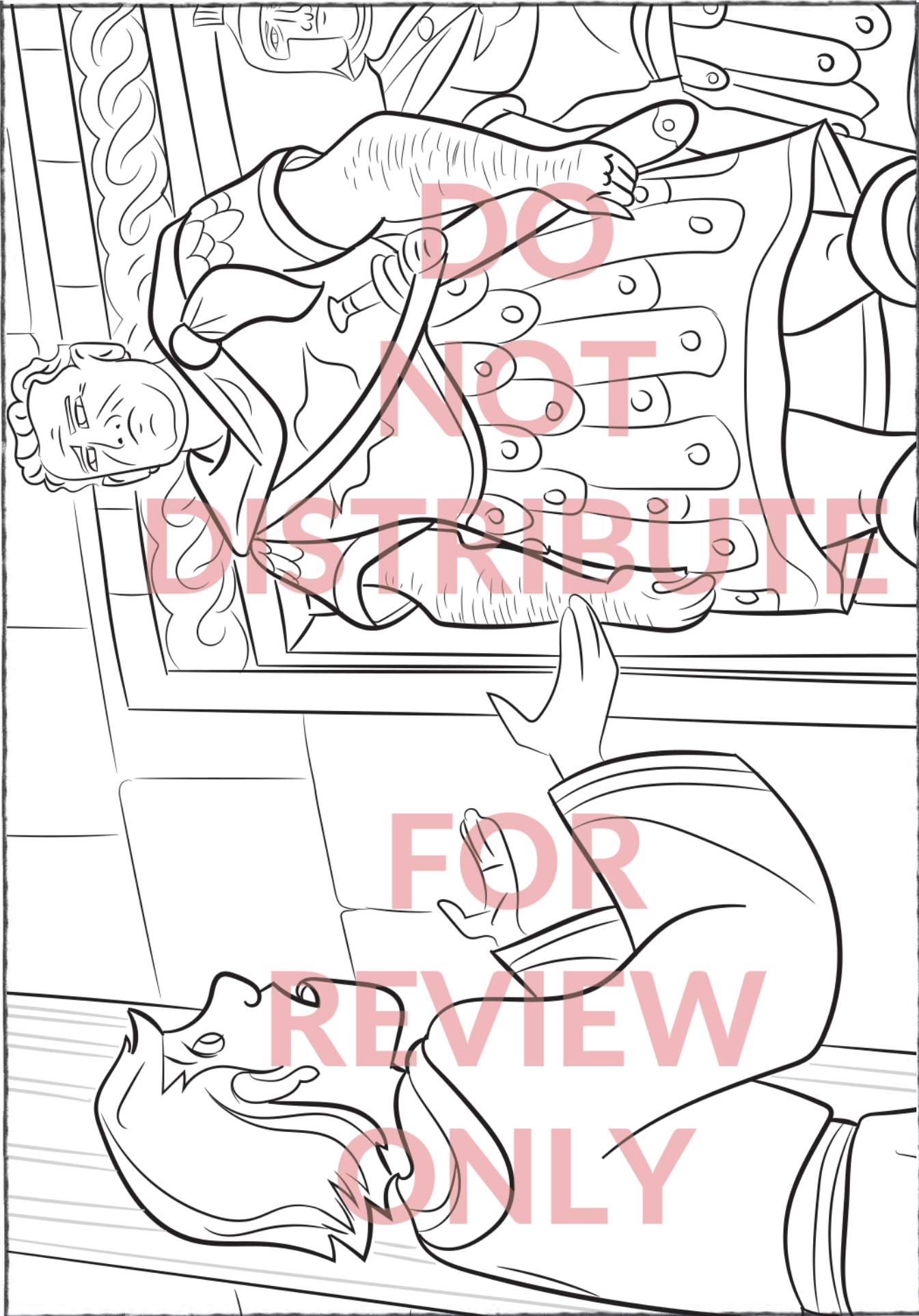
FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Use a copy of “The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me” to help your kids practice sharing the gospel. Speak to your children’s ministry director to get a copy.

The Plan to Stop Paul
L 111 | COURAGE

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WHEN PAUL WAS ARRESTED, GOD PROTECTED
HIM SO HE COULD PREACH ABOUT JESUS.

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LESSON 112: PATIENCE

PAUL BEFORE THE RULERS

Acts 24:22–27, 25:1–14, 26:24–32

PAUL BEFORE THE RULERS



- ♦ Acts 24:22–27, 25:1–14, 26:24–32
- ♦ Big Picture Q&A: When should we tell others about Jesus? We should always tell others about Jesus, even when it is difficult.
- ♦ Key Passage: Philippians 1:27a – Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

JESUS CONNECTION



God had chosen Paul to take the gospel to Gentiles, kings and the Jews (Acts 9:15–16). Paul met with people again and again to tell the good news about Jesus. He wanted everyone to believe that Jesus is Lord. Because Jesus has the power to save people from sin, Paul was willing to do whatever it took to share the gospel.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

PATIENCE – Being willing to wait.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Paul was in custody in Caesarea, the capital of the Roman province of Judea. The Jewish leaders had brought serious charges against him, so Paul now stood before Felix, the governor. Felix listened to Paul's defense but delayed a ruling. He met with Paul off and on for two years. When his time as governor ended, Felix left Paul in prison because he did not want to upset the Jews.

Festus succeeded Felix as governor. The Jews presented their accusations against Paul and asked Festus to bring him to Jerusalem. They hoped to ambush Paul as he traveled and kill him. But Festus invited Paul's accusers to make their case in Caesarea. When Festus heard Paul's case, he asked if Paul wanted to be tried in Jerusalem. Paul, knowing his rights as a Roman citizen, appealed to be heard by Caesar.

Several days later, King Agrippa visited Festus and heard about Paul. He asked to listen to Paul's defense himself. Festus wasn't sure how he would justify his sending Paul to Caesar without substantiated charges, and he hoped this hearing would provide stronger evidence against Paul. Agrippa told Paul he was out of his mind but determined Paul could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.

With these events, Paul was positioned to go to Rome, just as God had said he would (see Acts 19:21, 23:11). God had chosen Paul to take the gospel to Gentiles, kings and the Israelites (see Acts 9:15–16). Paul was confident that Jesus has the power to save people from sin, and he was willing to do whatever it took to share the gospel. As you teach the class, prompt them to consider how Paul might have felt as he spoke before rulers and remained in custody for two years. Lead them to consider how God was at work to keep His promises.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

During our last class, we learned that the Jewish leaders tried to find a way to kill Paul by spreading lies about him. Does anyone remember why? (*They didn't want Paul to talk about Jesus.*) Paul was arrested by Roman soldiers to keep him safe from the Jews. What message did God give Paul while he was in prison? (*To have courage because Paul would keep sharing about Jesus.*) What plan did some Jewish men come up with? (*To kill Paul.*) Who found out about the plan and told Paul? (*Paul's nephew.*) When the Roman commander learned about the plot on Paul's life, he took Paul to Caesarea to keep him safe. In today's lesson, we'll learn about who Paul shared the gospel with while he was a prisoner there. It's called "Paul Before the Rulers."

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Defend Your Point (Older Students)

- ◆ Form two groups. Assign the first group a point to defend (e.g., football is the greatest sport or hot dogs are better than hamburgers) and give them a few minutes to create and share their argument. Challenge the second group to try to break down the first group's argument. For each claim from the second group, the first group should defend its point.
- ◆ The more you know about something, the easier it is to defend it. If you don't know a lot about football, it's hard to argue that it's the greatest sport. In the Bible story we will hear today, Paul defended the gospel before important rulers. Paul knew Jesus; Jesus had changed his life. Think about how well you know Jesus and the Bible. Could you defend the truth before people who are against it? Think about that as you hear about Paul's experience.

Lock Down (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Form teams of three or four students or do the activity individually. Provide each group with paper and pencils. Invite the class to design and draw a prison or jail house that would be impossible to escape from. Ask them questions about the different design features they have included. Allow groups to share their designs.
- ◆ A good jail should be impossible to escape from, but what would you do if you were arrested and taken to a jail like this without having broken a law? What if you were arrested for teaching about Jesus? In our story today, we will learn about what happened to Paul while he was being held by the Romans.

Pillow Fort Prison (Younger Students)

- ◆ Use a variety of pillows, sheets or blankets to create a pillow fort prison. Let students take turns sitting in the fort. Ask what else your "prison" might need.
- ◆ Imagine being arrested and put in prison because you believe the truth about Jesus. In our story today, Paul was in prison because he taught people about Jesus. That sounds like bad news, but God used Paul's situation for good. Paul had opportunities to share the gospel with people who didn't know Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Philippians 1:27a

Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Key Passage Chain (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before the session, write the words of the key passage on separate strips of paper. Display the key passage poster and read it aloud together. Distribute the prepared word strips and challenge the class to put the words in order by connecting the strips to make a chain. After the students complete the chain, say the key passage together.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: When should we tell others about Jesus?

A: *We should always tell others about Jesus, even when it is difficult.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Paul Before the Rulers | Acts 24:22–27, 25:1–14, 26:24–32

Paul had narrowly escaped death in Jerusalem. **The Jews planned to kill Paul, but the Roman soldiers took him away to Caesarea, where he would be safe.** However, Paul was still a prisoner. **The Roman leaders wanted to figure out why the Jews hated Paul so much. So, Paul met with rulers to try to explain what was going on.**

First, Paul met with Felix the governor. Felix knew what Paul believed about Jesus, and he agreed to listen to him. Felix ordered the Roman guard to watch Paul but to also give him some freedom by letting Paul's friends come and serve him.

A few days later, Felix and his wife came for a meeting with Paul. **Paul talked about faith in Jesus. He talked about righteousness and self-control, and he explained that one day God is going to judge the world. Felix was afraid of what Paul said. He sent Paul away, but he met with him many times for the next two years. When a new governor came into power, Felix did not release Paul from prison.**

The new governor was named Festus. He traveled to Jerusalem to meet with the Jewish leaders. The Jewish leaders asked Festus to bring Paul to Jerusalem. They were still planning to attack Paul and kill him. But Festus wanted Paul to stay in Caesarea. He invited some of the Jewish leaders to go with him to see Paul.

Paul stood before Festus. "I have not done anything wrong," Paul explained again. "If I have done something that deserves death, then I will die. But these men can prove nothing. I want to see Caesar!" Caesar was the emperor of Rome, and as a Roman citizen, Paul had the right to take his case to him. **Festus agreed.**

While Paul was waiting to go to Rome, King Agrippa and Queen Bernice, rulers of Israel, visited Festus and Paul. Paul told the king how he became a believer. He explained that Jesus died to bring salvation to Jews and Gentiles.

"Paul, you are out of your mind!" Festus said.

"No," Paul said. "I am speaking the truth. I wish you—and everyone who is listening—might believe in Jesus."

King Agrippa, Festus and the others with them got up. They agreed that Paul had done nothing wrong. The king was ready to free Paul, but Paul had already asked to go to Rome.

JESUS CONNECTION



God had chosen Paul to take the gospel to Gentiles, kings and the Jews (Acts 9:15–16). Paul met with people again and again to tell the good news about Jesus. He wanted everyone to believe that Jesus is Lord. Because Jesus has the power to save people from sin, Paul was willing to do whatever it took to share the gospel.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

PATIENCE – Being willing to wait.

Living LifeWise

God is in control, so we can wait patiently for Him to accomplish His plan in His time.

Character Connection

It isn't always easy to do something over and over, like practice the piano, replay a video game level we keep losing or show up for rehearsal. We may not feel like we're making progress. Or we expected a reward that we didn't get. But patiently doing the right thing over and over, even when nothing seems to change, is one way that we can live God's way.

That's where Paul was. He wanted to go to Rome and Spain, but he was put in jail and just talked to people about Jesus. For years. But Paul was willing to do whatever it took to share the gospel of Jesus. He did the right thing repeatedly even though nothing seemed to change. Paul knew that God was in control of all his circumstances. He expected God to accomplish His plans in His time. And he kept on patiently doing the thing God had asked him to do.

Like Paul, the Holy Spirit will help us live God's way with patience. At times, we will have to trust God and wait for Him. It isn't easy, but the Bible promises that God "works out everything for the good of those who love him" (Rom. 8:28).

Can you think of some good things that might come from *repeatedly* doing the right thing in these situations?

- ◆ You practice for months on the piece for your recital or for a big game.
- ◆ You invite a friend to church whenever you get the chance.
- ◆ The principal always asks you to be a friend to students who are new to the school.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ Whom did Felix allow to visit Paul?
Paul's friends, Acts 24:23
- ◆ How often did Felix talk with Paul about the gospel?
Many times, Acts 24:24, 26
- ◆ How did Felix and his wife feel when they heard Paul share about Jesus and judgment?
Afraid, Acts 24:25

- ◆ Why didn't Felix release Paul from prison?
To make the Jews happy, Acts 24:27
- ◆ What was the name of the governor who ruled after Felix?
Festus, Acts 24:27
- ◆ Why did the Jews want Festus to bring Paul to Jerusalem?
So they could kill him, Acts 25:2-3
- ◆ Whom did Paul ask to be sent to in order to state his case?
Caesar, Acts 25:11

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Timeline Relay (Older Students)

- ◆ Before class, print out, cut apart and mix up the "Paul's Timeline" printable, one for each team. Divide students into teams; direct them to stand in a line on one side of the room. On your signal, the first player of each team will take a statement, run to the opposite wall and tape it up, then return and tag the next player. The second players will need to tape their statements in the appropriate place (before or after the first statement). Subsequent players can rearrange the statements as they place theirs in the appropriate order. After a team has all statements on the wall, quickly review them. If something is incorrect, a player can run down and rearrange the statements. Continue until one team has all the statements in the correct order:

- ◇ Paul shared the gospel.
- ◇ Paul was arrested in Jerusalem.
- ◇ The Lord appeared to Paul.
- ◇ Paul was taken to Caesarea.
- ◇ Paul met with Governor Felix.
- ◇ Paul shared the gospel.
- ◇ Paul met with Governor Festus.
- ◇ Paul shared the gospel.
- ◇ Paul met with King Agrippa and Queen Bernice.
- ◇ Paul shared the gospel.
- ◇ Paul waited to be taken to Rome.

True or False (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Remind the class that the book of Acts is in the New Testament and tells of the Holy Spirit's work in the lives of the apostles. Provide each student with a sheet of paper labeled *FALSE* on one side and *TRUE* on the other. Designate one side of the room as the jail. Invite the class to stand in a line in the middle of the room. Read the review statements for today's Bible story. Students will hold up their paper to show whether they think the statement is true or false. For every correct answer, they'll take one step away from jail. If they are incorrect, they must take one step toward it. For a false statement, ask a volunteer to explain what would make the statement true.
- ◇ Paul was a prisoner. (*True, Acts 24:23*)
- ◇ The first governor Paul met with was named Felix. (*True, Acts 24:22*)
- ◇ Felix wouldn't allow anyone to visit Paul. (*False; he allowed Paul's friends to visit, Acts 24:23*)
- ◇ Felix would not listen to Paul. (*False; Felix listened many times, Acts 24:24, 26*)

- ✧ When Felix and his wife heard what Paul had to share about Jesus and judgment, they laughed at Paul. (*False; Felix was afraid, Acts 24:25*)
- ✧ Felix released Paul from prison. (*False; he left Paul there to make the Jews happy, Acts 24:27*)
- ✧ The next governor after Felix was named Felix II. (*False; Festus, Acts 24:27*)
- ✧ Paul hoped that everyone listening might believe in Jesus. (*True, Acts 26:29*)
- ✧ The Jews wanted Festus to bring Paul to Jerusalem so they could kill him. (*True, Acts 25:2-3*)
- ✧ Paul asked that King Herod would hear his case. (*False; he appealed to Caesar, Acts 25:11*)
- ✧ Paul was too afraid to talk about Jesus in front of the kings and rulers. (*False; he preached about Jesus to governors and kings.*)
- ✧ We should always tell others about Jesus, even when it is difficult. (*True*)

The Gospel Game (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Guide the class to form a circle. Players should hold out their left hand toward the person next to them, hand open and palm up and place their right pointer finger on the middle of their neighbor's open palm. Explain that all players must keep their left hand flat while you read a sentence. When players hear the special word, they will try to grab the finger in their left hand while at the same time pulling their finger away from the person to their right. The first special word is *salvation*. Announce a new special word for each round:
 - ✧ **Salvation:** The gospel is the good news about Jesus. He came to save us from our sin, or give us his *salvation*.
 - ✧ **Everything:** God rules. In the world, God is in charge. He created it all, so He is in charge of *everything*.
 - ✧ **Punishment:** Everyone sins, or disobeys God, sometimes. Our sin separates us from God. God is holy and must punish sin. But God provided by sending His Son, Jesus, to take the *punishment* we deserve.
 - ✧ **Gift:** Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best *gift* ever!
 - ✧ **Turn:** We respond. Everyone has a choice to make. Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can *turn* away from self and sin and *turn* to Him.
- ◆ That was a fun game. If you have any questions about the gospel or what it means to follow Jesus, your LifeWise teacher or volunteer would be happy to talk about it with you. Sharing the gospel is not always easy, but it is simple. If you know these steps, you are ready to share the good news of Jesus with anyone! Paul preached about Jesus to governors and kings, as well as anyone else he met. The gospel is for everyone because we are all sinners in need of a Savior to rescue us. I encourage you to share the good news this week with someone who needs to hear it!

JESUS Banner (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Write the name *JESUS* in large block letters on a large piece of paper. Invite the students to write words or draw pictures describing Jesus or the things He did in the Bible or in their lives. Consider displaying the finished banner on a focal wall in the classroom or entrance to the classroom. If space is limited, give each student a small piece of paper and have them do it individually or use your whiteboard and take a picture of the finished product.

- ◆ Read John 21:25. We could fill up a million banners with all the amazing things Jesus has done for us. He is so full of grace and mercy, and we can thank Him for all that He has done. He has saved us from our sin and invited us into His eternal kingdom! When we know how wonderful Jesus is and the wonderful things He has done for us, we begin to understand that sharing the gospel is worth whatever difficulties may come. We have hope in Jesus.

Hot Potato (Younger Students)

- ◆ Direct the class to sit in a circle. Pass out two balls of different colors. Instruct them to pass the two balls in opposite directions. Play a song as the class passes the balls. Stop the music at random intervals and choose a color. Whoever is holding that ball must answer a Bible review question. If he doesn't know the answer, he must ask the person with the other ball and share the answer. Restart the music and continue playing the game.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ A Message For Everyone (Older Students)
- ◆ Hidden Words (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for giving us Your Word and revealing Yourself to us through the pages of Scripture. There is nothing more precious and valuable than knowing You. We praise You because You are a God who uses people like us to bring glory to Your great name. We ask that You would give us opportunities to share the good news of Jesus with someone this week. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How do you think Paul felt as he spoke before rulers? How do you think he felt being in custody for two years?
- What is God's plan for us? How do you expect that to happen?
- Does God always work in ways we expect or understand?



PAUL BEFORE THE RULERS

ACTS 24:22-27, 25:1-14, 26:24-32

MAIN POINT: PAUL PREACHED ABOUT JESUS TO GOVERNORS AND KINGS.

Paul had narrowly escaped death in Jerusalem. The Jews planned to kill Paul, but the Roman soldiers took him away to Caesarea, where he would be safe. The Roman leaders wanted to figure out why the Jews hated Paul so much. So Paul met with rulers to try to explain what was going on.

First, Paul met with Felix the governor. Paul talked about faith in Jesus. He talked about righteousness and self-control, and he explained that one day God is going to judge the world. Felix was afraid of what Paul said. He sent Paul away, but he met with him many times for the next two years. When a new governor came into power, Felix did not release Paul from prison.

The new governor was named Festus. Paul stood before Festus. "I have not done anything wrong," Paul explained again. "I want to see Caesar!" Festus agreed.

While Paul was waiting to go to Rome, King Agrippa and Queen Bernice visited Festus and Paul. Paul told the king how he became a believer. He explained that Jesus died to bring salvation to Jews and Gentiles.

"Paul, you are out of your mind!" Festus said.

King Agrippa, Festus and the others with them got up. They agreed that Paul had done nothing wrong. The king was ready to free Paul, but Paul had already asked to go to Rome.

Jesus Connection: God had chosen Paul to take the gospel to Gentiles, kings and the Israelites (Acts 9:15-16). Paul met with people again and again to tell the good news about Jesus. He wanted everyone to believe that Jesus is Lord. Because Jesus has the power to save people from sin, Paul was willing to do whatever it took to share the gospel.

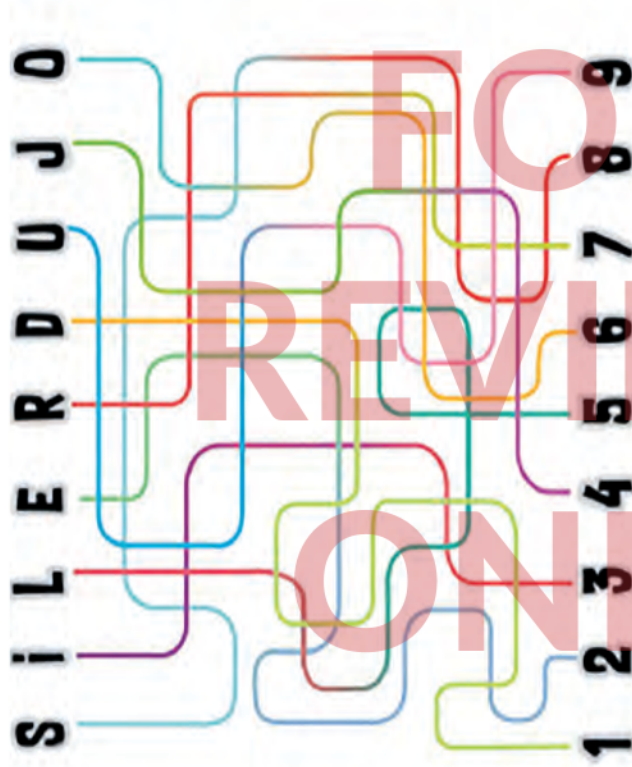
Key Passage: Philippians 1:27a – Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

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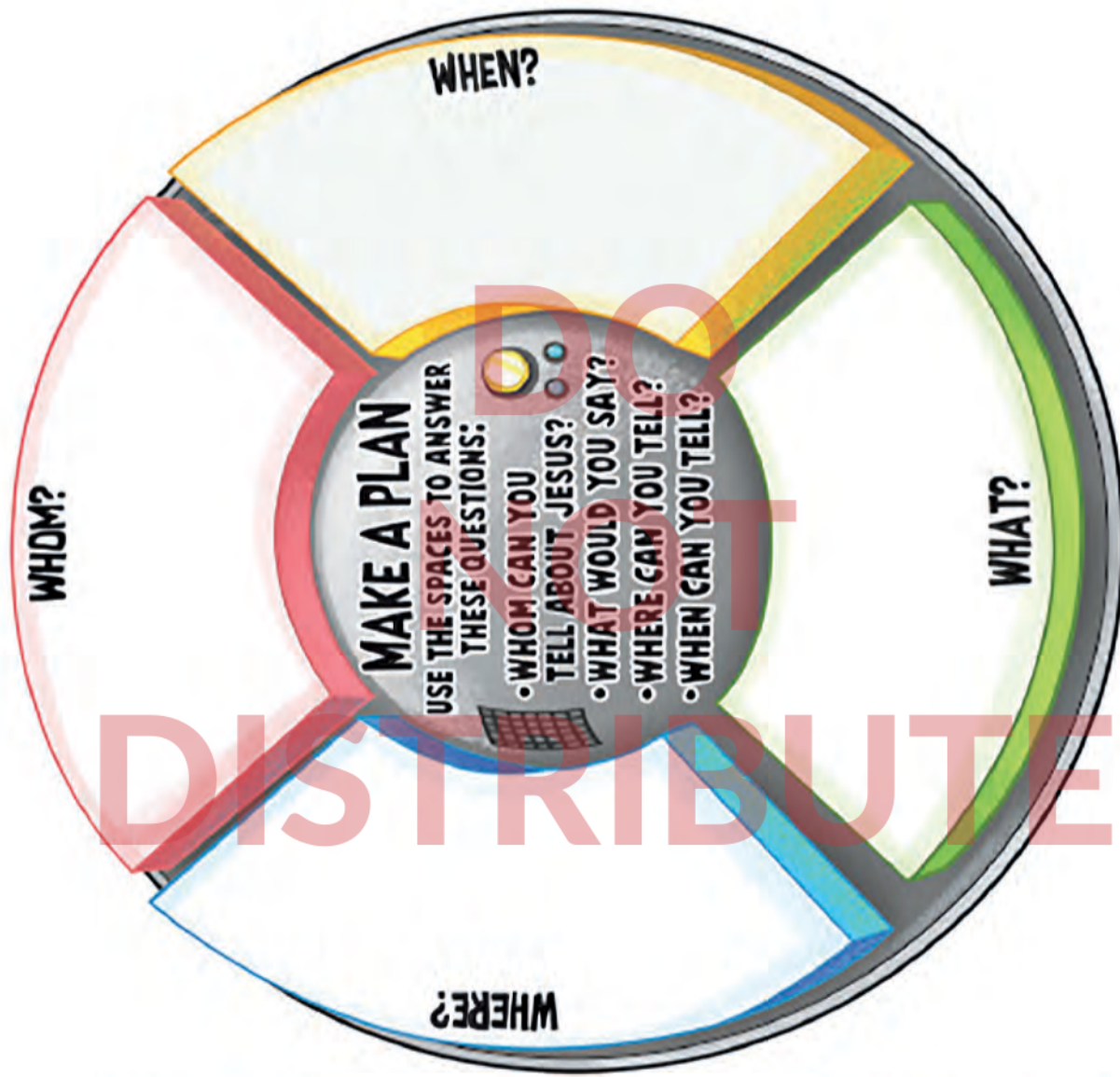
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A MESSAGE FOR EVERYONE

What message did Paul want everyone to believe?
Untangle and reorder the letters to find out.



4	2	8	9	8		
3	8		5	6	7	1



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HIDDEN WORDS

INSTRUCTIONS: Find and circle the words hidden in the picture. Then, arrange them to form the main point.



KEY PASSAGE:

Philippians 1:27a – Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- When should we tell others about Jesus? We should always tell others about Jesus, even when it is difficult.

BIBLE STORY:

PAUL BEFORE THE RULERS

- Paul waited in jail for a trial.
- Paul was unafraid to share the gospel with anyone.
- The rulers were convinced Paul had done nothing deserving of jail.
- Paul asked to see Caesar and so remained in jail until he could.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What are some ways God used Paul's arrest for good?
- Is it worthwhile to talk about Jesus if the person doesn't believe?
- Why wasn't Paul afraid of the rulers?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

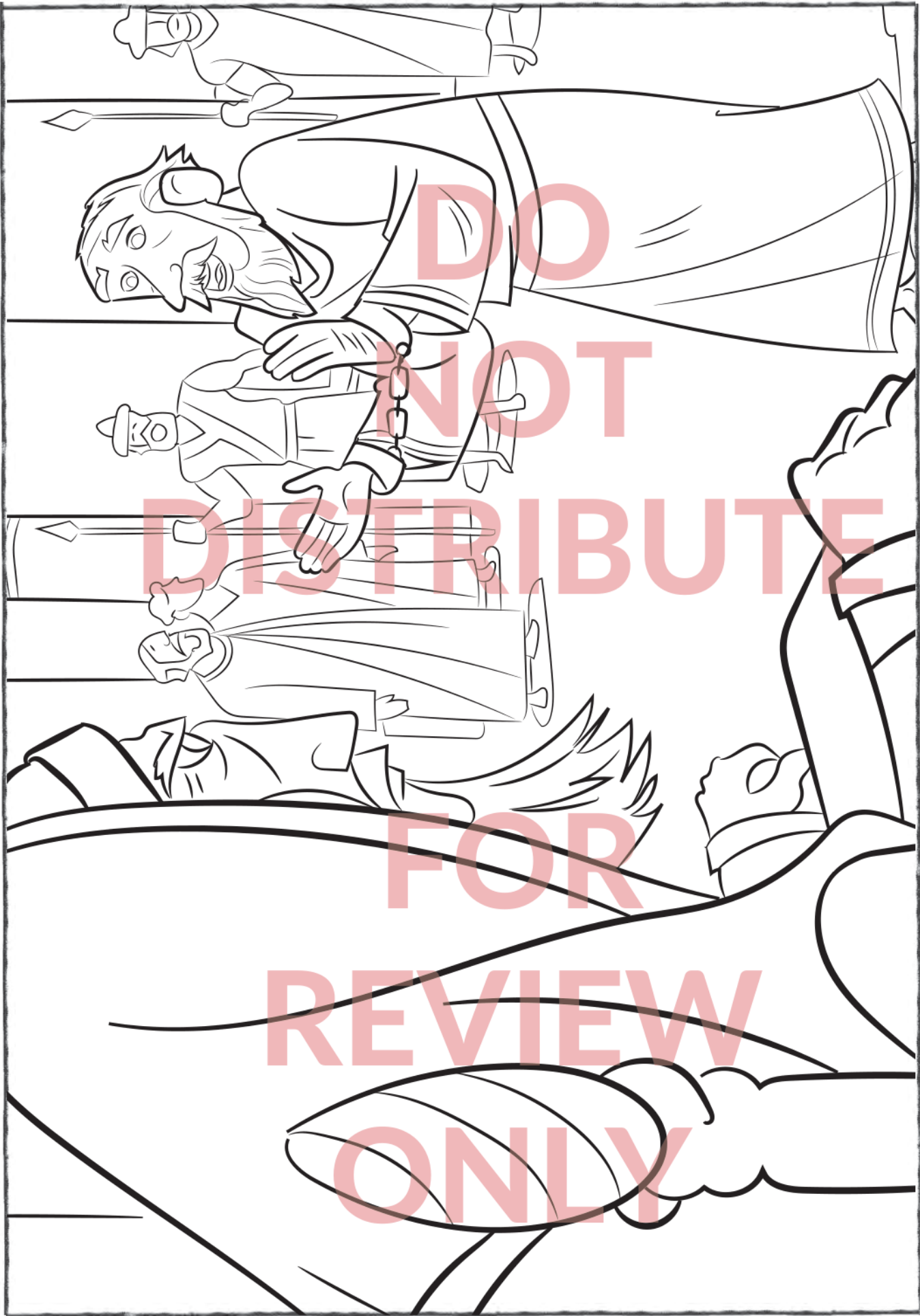
- Play a series of "leader" games, like Simon Says or Follow the Leader. Talk to your kids about Jesus being the ultimate leader.

Paul Before the Rulers

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ONLY**



PAUL PREACHED ABOUT JESUS
TO GOVERNORS AND KINGS.

L 112 Paul Before the Rulers | PATIENCE

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Paul shared the gospel.

Paul met with Govenor Festus.

Paul was arrested in Jerusalem.

Paul shared the gospel.

The Lord appeared to Paul.

Paul met with King Agrippa
and Queen Bernice.

Paul was taken to Caesarea.

Paul shared the gospel.

Paul met with Govenor Felix.

Paul waited to be taken to Rome.

Paul shared the gospel.

Paul shared the gospel.

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LESSON 113: CONFIDENCE

THE SHIPWRECK

Acts 27:13-44, 28:11-16

THE SHIPWRECK



- ◆ Acts 27:13-44, 28:11-16
- ◆ Big Picture Q&A: When should we tell others about Jesus? We should always tell others about Jesus, even when it is difficult.
- ◆ Key Passage: Philippians 1:27a – Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

JESUS CONNECTION



Paul trusted God to keep His promise to rescue them from the storm. He encouraged the sailors to trust and obey God too. God calls us to trust in His Son, Jesus, who died to rescue us from sin and death, and to tell others this good news.

LIFEWISE QUALITY



CONFIDENCE – Trusting in God's goodness and character no matter what.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Paul was in Roman custody because of unfounded accusations brought against him by the Jews. Paul had stood before rulers in Caesarea and invoked his right as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar. So, Festus the governor arranged for Paul to go to Rome.

Paul got onto a ship going toward Rome. As if Paul's journey to Rome had not already been delayed and complicated enough, the ship was caught up in a terrible storm. Paul had warned the crew not to sail from Crete because they would lose everything and die. But they didn't listen. Paul pointed out the error of their ways, but he still gave them hope. An angel had appeared to Paul. He said Paul would make it to Rome and all of the people with him would survive.

Paul urged everyone on the ship to eat so they would have energy. They planned to run the ship ashore on an island, but the ship got stuck on a sandbar. The waves battered the ship, and it broke into pieces; however, all of the people survived and made it safely to shore, just as God said.

Paul suffered for Christ. In his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul listed the difficulties he faced: beatings, stoning, shipwrecks, various dangers, hardship, sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, nakedness and other daily pressures (see 2 Cor. 11:24-29). Again and again, Paul saw evidence of God's control over his life, and the gospel was advanced.

As you teach your students, emphasize that Paul trusted God to keep His promise to rescue them from the storm. He also encouraged the sailors to trust God too. God calls us to trust in His Son, Jesus, who died to rescue us from sin and death, and to tell others this good news. We can encourage others to trust God because we know He is good and in control.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

The Bible tells the story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus. In the New Testament, we find the story of Paul, a believer who helped spread the gospel—the good news about Jesus. Paul boldly shared Jesus, but the Jewish people tried to kill him because they didn't want others to turn from the Jewish religion to Jesus. Who found out about their plan and told the Roman soldiers? (*Paul's nephew.*) Paul spoke to many rulers of the land. What did Paul share with them? (*The good news.*) Why didn't they release Paul from prison? (*To please the Jews.*) Whom did Paul ask to hear his defense when the rulers would not release him from prison? (*Caesar.*) Today, we will learn about another hard situation Paul went through on his way to see Caesar in Rome.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Human Battleship (Older Students)

- ♦ Use chairs, clothespins and a bedsheet to divide the room in half at chest height. Make sure the divider will not fall if it is hit or jostled. Form two teams. Each team will lie down on one side of the divider. The class will toss beach balls or foam balls back and forth over the divider. Students may not get up or move around on the floor. If a player catches a ball, the student who threw it is out. If a ball hits a player who can't catch it, she is "hit." After two hits, a player is "sunk" and out of the game.
- ♦ Great job with our game! Today, we're going to hear about Paul's shipwreck. His ship wasn't pelted by beach balls; it was in a huge storm. How would you feel if you were on a ship in a bad storm?

Meant to Protect (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Challenge students to think of and share things that protect them in various situations. [Examples: *sunscreen in the sun, helmet on bike, etc.*] List their ideas on a chalkboard or dry erase board.
- ♦ Those were great examples of things that are meant to protect you from harm, but I have a question: Will sunscreen protect you from a shark bite? These things are helpful in some situations, but they can't protect you from everything. In the Bible story we will hear today, Paul needed protection during a storm. Nothing he or the sailors on the boat could do would keep them safe. We'll find out what happened when Paul was shipwrecked.

Float a Boat (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Give each student a piece of aluminum foil to shape into a boat. Encourage creativity. Set out examples of boat designs in case they need help. Allow them to test their boats in a shallow tub of water. Provide pennies to see how much weight their boats can carry before they sink.
- ♦ In today's Bible story, Paul found himself on a ship in some dangerous waters. Everyone on the ship was afraid they wouldn't survive. In fact, they threw everything they could overboard to lighten the ship so it wouldn't sink! Do you think Paul and the others survived? We'll find out!

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Philippians 1:27a

Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Cup Stack (Older Students)

- ♦ Before class, write the key passage in words or phrases on plastic cups. Alternate writing the words upside-down and right-side-up on the cups so the class can stack them vertically to form a tower. Challenge the group to see how quickly they can stack the cups so the words are in order from bottom to top. When students finish, read the key passage aloud. Then, knock down the tower and play again. Paul dedicated his life to sharing the gospel. In our Bible story today, God protected Paul in a shipwreck so he could stand before Caesar. Paul wanted to honor God no matter what—in life and in death.

Funny Voices (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Display the key passage poster and invite the students to say it aloud with you. Then, challenge them to read it again using silly voices (high-pitched, underwater, pirate and so forth). Cover the key passage poster and ask for volunteers to say the whole key passage from memory.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: When should we tell others about Jesus?

A: We should always tell others about Jesus, even when it is difficult.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Paul Before the Rulers | Acts 27:13–44, 28:11–16

Paul was a prisoner in Caesarea. He had asked to see Caesar about his case. Caesar was the leader of the Roman Empire, **so Paul got on a ship with other prisoners going to Rome. The journey was difficult. Strong winds and rain tossed the ship.** The crew threw things overboard and tried to keep the ship from breaking apart, but the storm did not stop for many days. **All the people on the ship were afraid they would die.**

One night, God sent an angel to Paul. The angel told Paul to not be afraid. God would save the lives of everyone on the ship. Paul told everyone on board what God had said. “Take courage,” he said. Paul believed everything would happen just like God said. The people on the ship would not die. They would have to run the ship onto an island.

When the ship got close to an island, some of the sailors tried to escape in the lifeboat. Paul told them they would only be saved if they stayed on the ship. The sailors listened to Paul. No one had eaten in a long time, so Paul told them to eat. He thanked God and broke the bread, and everyone ate. Then they raised the sails and headed toward the island.

When they got close, **the ship struck a sandbar and stopped. The waves crashed into the ship, and it began to break into pieces.** The soldiers were afraid the prisoners would escape, so some of them wanted to kill the prisoners. But **an army officer ordered everyone to swim for shore. Those who could not swim clung to the planks and pieces of the ship. They all made it safely to shore. Paul was right; God saved all of their lives.**

The people who lived on the island treated them kindly and built a fire to warm them. As they lit the fire, a poisonous snake came out from the firewood and bit Paul on the hand. The islanders were amazed when Paul didn't become sick or die.

The chief official invited Paul, the soldiers and prisoners to stay at his house for three days. When Paul learned that the official's father was very sick, he went into his room and healed him. Then, the rest of the sick on the Island came to Paul and were healed. Paul shared the good news about Jesus with the people of Malta.

Three months later, Paul got onto another ship and sailed to Rome. Paul was still a prisoner, but instead of going to jail, Paul was allowed to live by himself in a house. A soldier stayed with him to guard him. People came to Paul's house and listened to him speak about the kingdom of God and about Jesus. Some of the people believed and followed Jesus.



JESUS CONNECTION

Paul trusted God to keep His promise to rescue them from the storm. He encouraged the sailors to trust and obey God too. God calls us to trust in His Son, Jesus, who died to rescue us from sin and death, and to tell others this good news.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

CONFIDENCE – Trusting in God's goodness and character no matter what.

Living LifeWise

God is completely trustworthy, so we can be confident in every situation.

Character Connection

Have you ever seen a person walk on a highwire? Would you be willing to try it? What if the person on the highwire offered to carry you across? Would you go?

Confidence is a trust that the person who is offering to help you can actually do what he says he can do. We are much more likely to let someone carry us on a highwire if we've watched them do it before, right? The better we know someone, the more sure we are that they can be trusted, the more confidence in them we will have.

Paul wasn't afraid of the shipwreck because God told him what would happen. And after years of knowing God, Paul understood that God is completely trustworthy. He is the powerful Creator who loved them and had a plan for Paul. So when God said, "Don't be afraid; everyone on the boat will make it to shore," Paul was confident that that's exactly what would happen. How did Paul show his confidence in God? (*Told them what God had said, had them eat/drink in the storm, gave thanks, etc.*)

God is completely trustworthy. His Word is full of promises that He will keep fully. He sent Jesus to die for our sins and His Spirit to help us live life His way. There is nothing that He cannot handle, good or bad, fun or hard, and He knows us, loves us and wants to take care of us. Knowing we can trust God completely means we can live with confidence every day. We can pray instead of worrying. We can turn to Him for help. And we can confidently do anything God asks us to do because He will never let us down.

Let's think about how confidence might look in these situations:

- ◆ Your uncle promised to take you to a movie, but he's running late. What might it look like to have confidence in your uncle? What would a lack of confidence look like?
- ◆ It was a very bad day, but now it's time to say your bedtime prayers. What can you say to God that shows you have confidence in Him?
- ◆ Your friend told you he'd save you a seat on the bus, but you overhear a classmate say that he is planning to sit with the same friend. What might help you be confident that your friend will do what he said?

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ Who told Paul that God would save the lives of everyone on the ship?
An angel, Acts 27:23-24
- ◆ What did a few sailors try to do to save themselves?
Escape in a lifeboat, Acts 27:30
- ◆ What warning did Paul give the soldiers?
They would only survive if everyone stayed on the ship, Acts 27:31
- ◆ How did everyone reach the shore?
They swam or floated on pieces of the ship, Acts 27:43-44
- ◆ Why were the islanders so surprised when Paul was bit by a poisonous snake?
He didn't get sick or die, Acts 28:6
- ◆ Whom did Paul and the others stay with for three days?
Publius, the chief official of Malta, Acts 28:7
- ◆ Whom did Paul heal when he went to Publius' house?
Publius' father, Acts 28:8
- ◆ How did Paul heal Publius' father?
Through God's power
- ◆ What did Paul do while they waited for another ship?
Heal the sick and share the gospel, Acts 28:8-9

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Sequence Strips (Older Students)

- ◆ Explain that the book of Acts tells the story of the early church and of the gospel spreading all over the world. Ask students to answer the following questions:
 - ◇ Which book of the Bible did the story today come from? (*Acts*)
 - ◇ Is the book of Acts part of the Old or New Testament? (*New*)
- ◆ Before class, create sentence strips with the story sequence sentences below and mix them up. Invite the class to review the story by putting the events in order. If you have a larger class, use multiple sets of strips. Make sure non-readers are paired with adult helpers or older readers.
 1. Paul was a prisoner and boarded a boat headed for Rome.
 2. A storm swept in with strong wind and waves, making sailing difficult.

3. God sent an angel to Paul telling him to not be afraid because God would protect everyone on the ship.
4. Paul told his fellow passengers to take courage; God would save them!
5. Some sailors tried to get away on a lifeboat, but Paul told them they would only be saved if they stayed with the ship.
6. Paul broke bread and encouraged everyone to eat.
7. The ship ran aground on a sandbar and everyone swam to shore.
8. Paul and everyone on the ship made it safely to Malta.
9. The people of Malta welcomed and helped them.
10. Paul healed the sick and shared the gospel with the people of Malta.

Sculpt a Scene (Older Students)

- ◆ Divide into four groups. Assign each group a scene to sculpt from the list below. Choose a volunteer to be the sculptor and pose their group mates by moving their head, arms, and legs to create their scene. When the sculptors finish, guide students to describe what happened in the scene.

- ◇ Scene 1: Acts 27:13–20 — Surviving the storm
- ◇ Scene 2: Acts 27:21–24,33–37 — Paul encourages the sailors with God's promises
- ◇ Scene 3: Acts 27:39–44 — Getting to shore
- ◇ Scene 4: Acts 28:7–10 — Paul heals the sick on Malta

- ◆ While many things happened on Paul's journey to Rome, God was not surprised by any of them. God protected Paul in the shipwreck so he could share the gospel and stand before Caesar. Paul trusted God to keep His promise to rescue everyone from the storm. He encouraged the sailors to trust God, too. God calls us to trust in His Son, Jesus, who died to rescue us from sin and death, and to tell others this good news. Like a person would throw a life jacket to someone who is drowning, we can tell others about Jesus because He is our only hope for life and salvation. Jesus saves!

A Boat in the Storm (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Invite the class to sit in two or three rows. You may use rows of chairs to designate where they should sit. Stand in front of the students and call out storm conditions and encourage them to move with you as you pretend to be on a boat. Suggested conditions and reactions:
 - ◇ Port side wave: lean to their right as though a large wave hit the left (port) side.
 - ◇ Starboard wave: lean to their left as though a large wave hit the right (starboard) side.
 - ◇ Hoist the sail: stand up.
 - ◇ Giant wave: lean back as if traveling up a wave before then leaning forward as though rushing down a wave.
 - ◇ Whirlpool: stand up and spin in a circle and sit back down.
- ◆ That was a pretty fun game, but being in a storm in a real boat on the ocean would not be fun at all. I would be so scared! Paul and the sailors were probably afraid too, but God protected Paul in the shipwreck so he could stand before Caesar. We all face difficult and scary times in our lives. Even in the midst of them, we can trust that God is good and that He is working things together for His

glory and our good. Our hope is not on things in this life, but in Jesus. When Jesus returns and fixes everything broken in the world, we will live forever with Him.

Shipwreck Craft (Younger Students)

- ◆ Help the class cut paper plates in half, and give each student half a paper plate. Help students write the main point on the back: *God protected Paul in the shipwreck so he could stand before Caesar.* Then, encourage them to color their plate to look like a boat. Help them break craft sticks to glue around the edges to represent the boat falling apart.
- ◆ God protected Paul in the shipwreck so he could stand before Caesar. The soldiers and sailors on the boat were afraid they would die in the storm. They couldn't see what God was doing. But God used Paul to guide them and encourage them to trust God. Paul pointed them to Jesus even in the midst of a scary storm. In our lives, we can trust Jesus no matter what difficulties we face, and we should encourage others to trust Jesus too.

Pantomime (Younger Students)

- ◆ Invite students to imitate the different actions as you read through the pantomime.
 - ◇ Paul was a prisoner. (*Hands cuffed in front of back*)
 - ◇ A storm took control of the boat. (*Rock back and forth*)
 - ◇ God sent an angel to encourage Paul. (*Stand with arms sweeping up and down*)
 - ◇ Paul told the soldiers not to leave the ship. (*Put arms in an X in front of body*)
 - ◇ Paul asked everyone to eat. (*Pretend to eat*)
 - ◇ The ship ran aground on a sandbar and everyone swam to shore. (*Swim with arms*)
 - ◇ The islanders made them a fire. (*Warm hands by fire*)
 - ◇ A snake bit Paul, but he didn't get sick. (*Hold hand and shake the snake off*)
 - ◇ Paul healed many sick people on Malta. (*Put hands together as if praying*)
 - ◇ Paul got on another ship and went to Rome. (*Pretend to paddle a boat*)
- ◆ After going through the story, read the pantomime and increase the speed. See how fast you can get through the actions that summarize the story.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ Survival at Sea (Older Students)
- ◆ Shipwreck Word Search (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, we thank You for Your protection over us. We praise You for Your goodness and faithfulness to us. We thank You for holding our lives together when things feel out of control or scary. Comfort us and give us courage when we need it. Help us this week to step out in faith and share the gospel with others who need to hear about Your great power and mercy. Amen.

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- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What kind of difficulties or suffering did Paul face? (See 2 Corinthians 11:24-29.)
- How can you encourage others to trust God?
- What evidence do you see of God's control over your life?

THE SHIPWRECK

ACTS 27:13-44, 28:11-16

MAIN POINT: GOD PROTECTED PAUL IN THE SHIPWRECK SO HE COULD STAND BEFORE CAESAR.

Paul was a prisoner in Caesarea. He had asked to see Caesar about his case, so Paul got on a ship with other prisoners going to Rome. The journey was difficult. Strong winds and rain tossed the ship. All the people on the ship were afraid they would die.

One night, God sent an angel to Paul. The angel told Paul to not be afraid. God would save the lives of everyone on the ship. Paul told everyone on board what God had said.

When the ship got close to an island, the ship struck a sandbar and stopped. The waves crashed into the ship, and it began to break into pieces. An army officer ordered everyone to swim for shore. Those who could not swim clung to the planks and pieces of the ship. They all made it safely to shore. Paul was right; God saved all of their lives.

Three months later, Paul got onto another ship and sailed to Rome. Paul was still a prisoner, but instead of going to jail, Paul was allowed to live by himself in a house. A soldier stayed with him to guard him. People came to Paul's house and listened to him speak about the kingdom of God and about Jesus. Some of the people believed and followed Jesus.

Jesus Connection: Paul trusted God to keep His promise to rescue them from the storm. He encouraged the sailors to trust and obey God too. God calls us to trust in His Son, Jesus, who died to rescue us from sin and death and to tell others this good news.

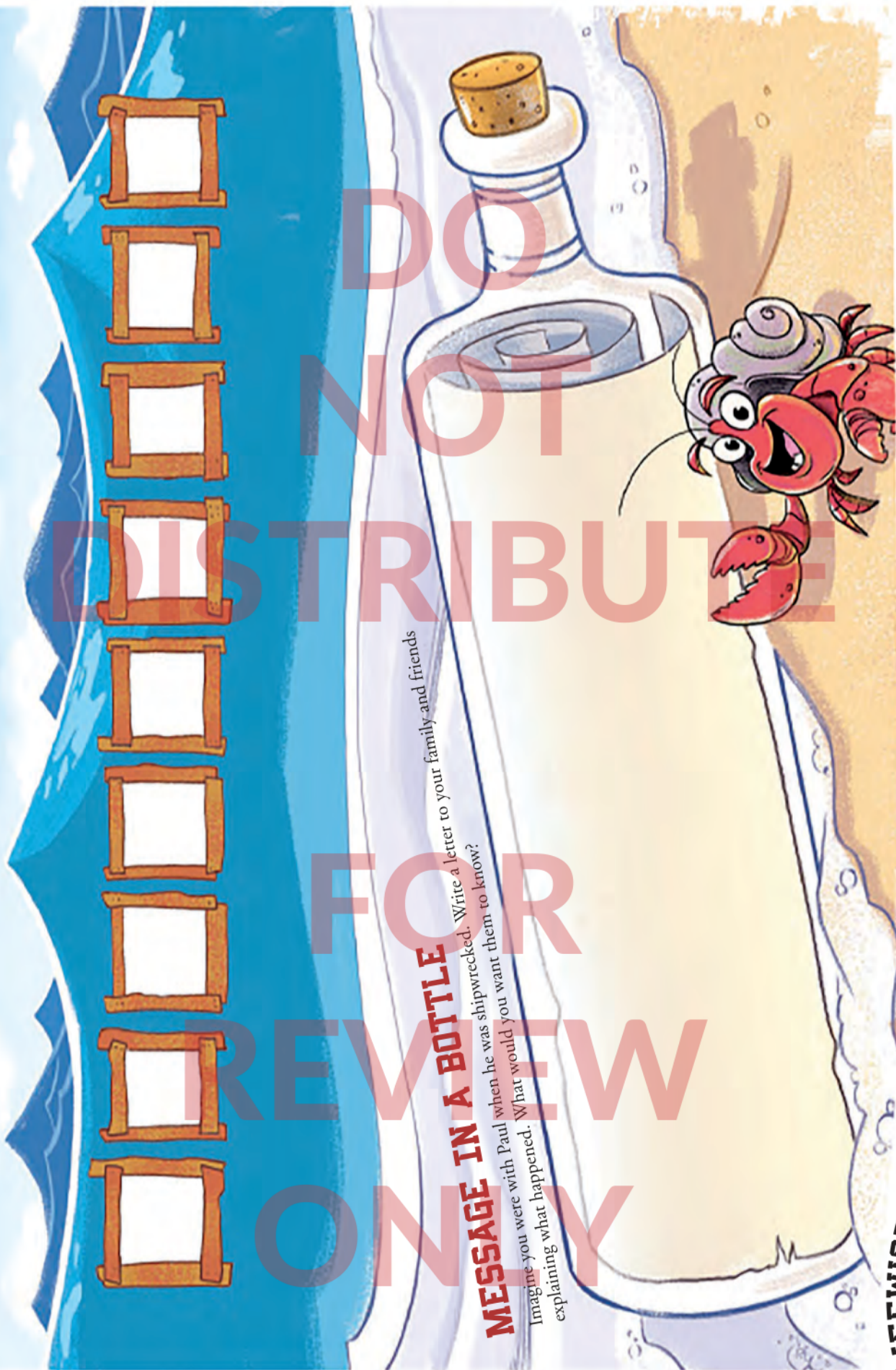
Key Passage: Philippians 1:27a – Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

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SURVIVAL AT SEA

Use the clues to fill in the blanks and discover what Paul faced in today's Bible story.



MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE Write a letter to your family and friends

Imagine you were with Paul when he was shipwrecked. Write a letter to your family and friends

What would you want them to know?

What would you want them to know?

What would you want them to know?

LIFEWISE
ACADEMY
✦ ✦ ✦

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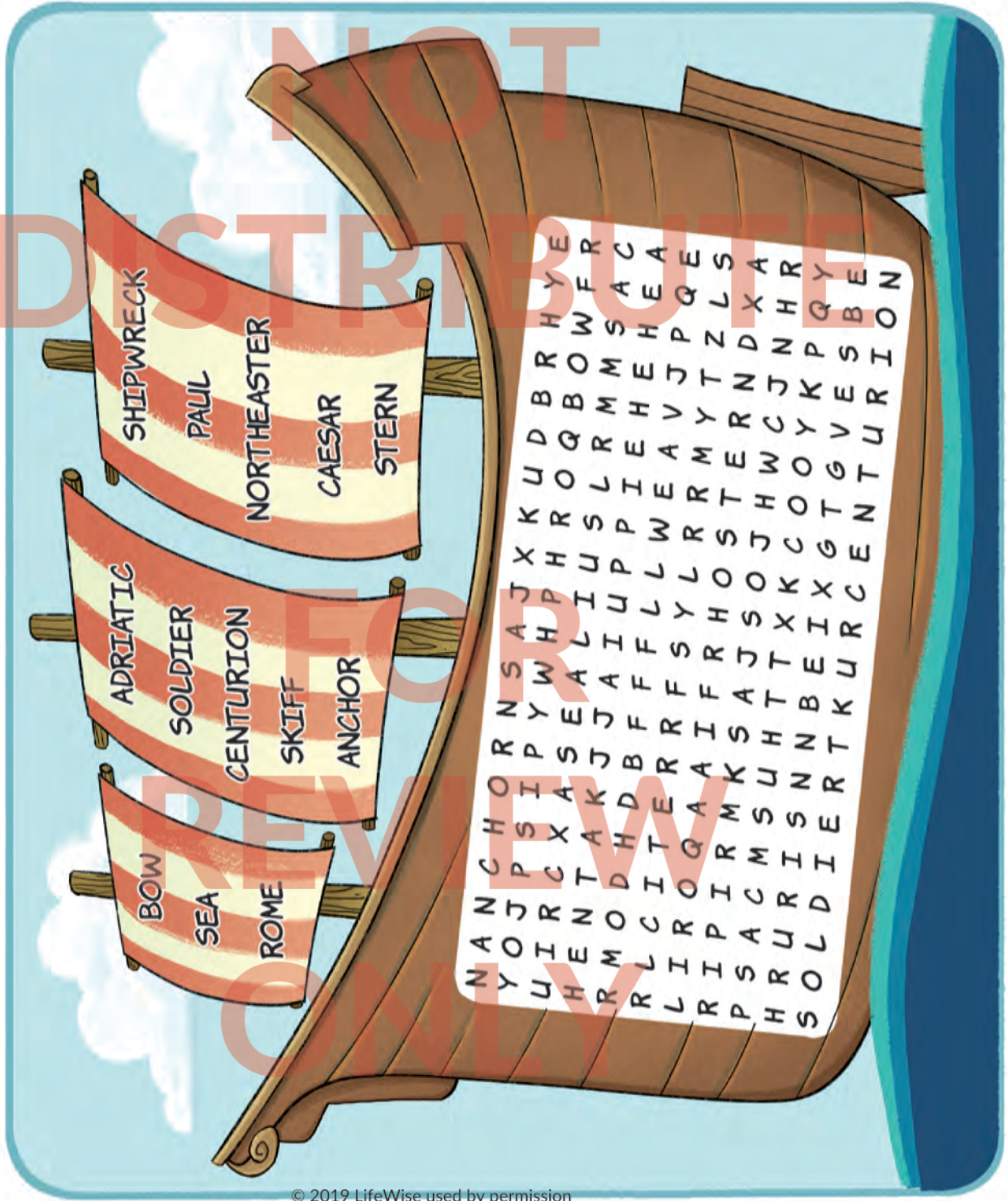
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SHIPWRECK WORD SEARCH

INSTRUCTIONS: Find the words from the word bank hidden in the letters on the ship.



KEY PASSAGE:

Philippians 1:27a – Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- When should we tell others about Jesus? We should always tell others about Jesus, even when it is difficult.

BIBLE STORY:

THE SHIPWRECK

- Paul was sailing to Rome to see Caesar when a storm began to toss the ship.
- The sailors were afraid the ship would sink and prisoners would escape.
- God protected Paul in the shipwreck so he could stand before Caesar.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Who do you think was more afraid in the storm, Paul or the sailors? Why?
- How did God use the shipwreck for good?
- What are some hard things in your life that God can use?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

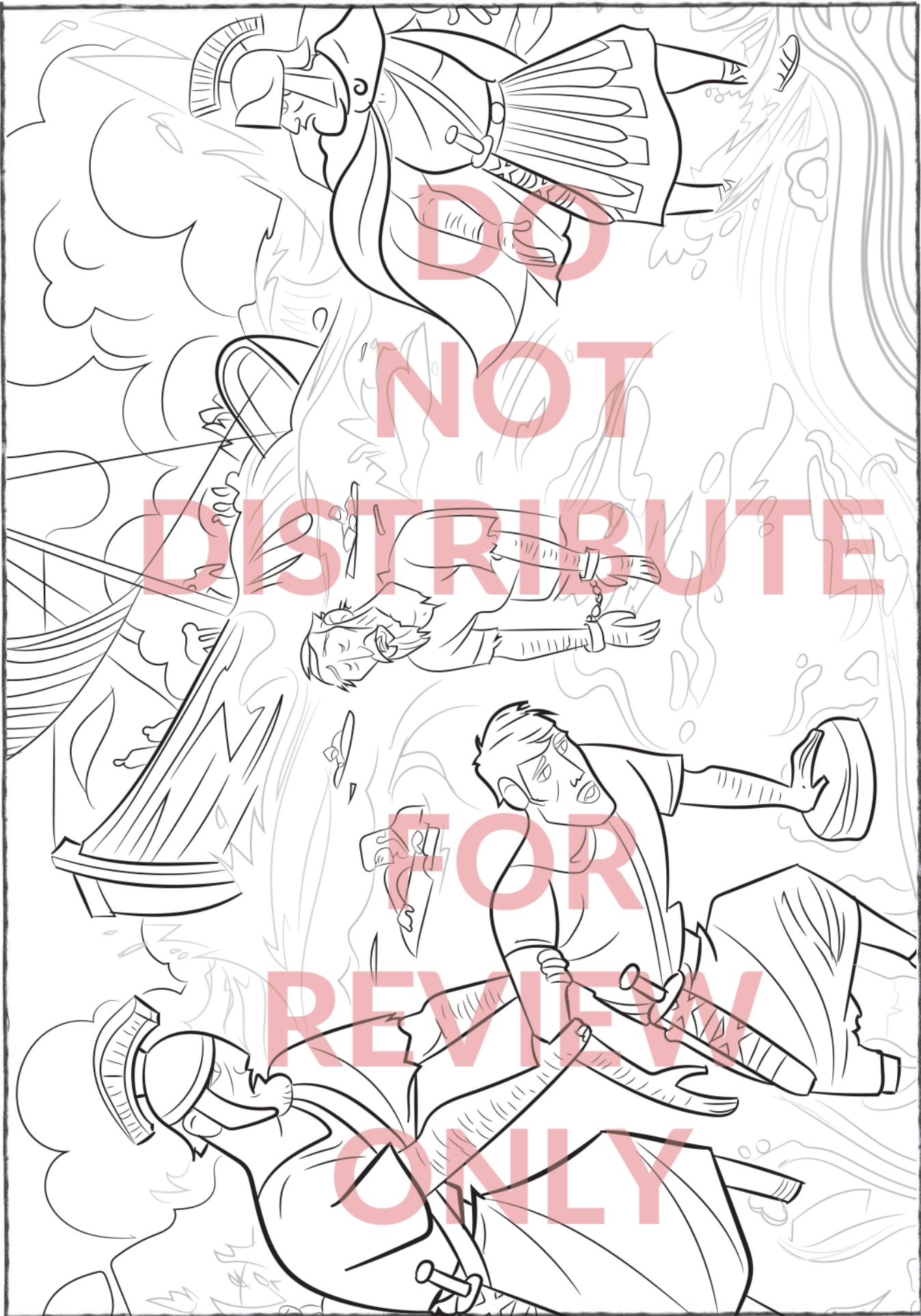
- Find instructions online to make paper boats. Take your kids to a lake or pond to sail them.

The Shipwreck

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GOD PROTECTED PAUL IN THE SHIPWRECK
SO HE COULD STAND BEFORE CAESAR.

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L 113 The Shipwreck | CONFIDENCE

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LESSON 114: DISCERNMENT

PAUL'S JOY IN PRISON

Philippians 1:12-30

PAUL'S JOY IN PRISON



- ◆ Philippians 1:12-30
- ◆ Big Picture Q&A: When should we tell others about Jesus? We should always tell others about Jesus, even when it is difficult.
- ◆ Key Passage: Philippians 1:27a – Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

JESUS CONNECTION



God used Paul's difficult circumstances to spread the gospel and build the church. Paul knew that because Jesus suffered to bring salvation to the world, believers doing God's work would suffer too.

LIFEWISE QUALITY



DISCERNMENT – Being able to recognize what is true and false or right and wrong.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Paul wrote his letter to the Philippian believers when he was a prisoner at a house in Rome. Paul had planted the church in Philippi about 10 years earlier. The letter begins with thanksgiving and joy, a remarkable response in light of Paul's lengthy imprisonment. He was waiting to present his case to Caesar, the emperor of Rome.

People began to hear about Paul and why he was a prisoner. The whole imperial guard knew that Paul was in chains because he followed Jesus. Despite what seemed like a series of setbacks, the sufferings Paul faced actually advanced the gospel—and for this reason, Paul was joyful.

As you teach your class, remind them that joy is one of the qualities seen in the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Explain that joy is delight that comes from knowing and serving God. Paul's joy was not self-generated. He didn't muster up joy because he was super-spiritual or naively optimistic about his circumstances. Paul had joy because he was focused on Jesus.

No matter what chaos or suffering surrounded Paul, these realities were constant: the gospel was being spread, Jesus was Lord and Paul knew Him. This eternal perspective was essential to Paul's peace and joy. God used Paul's difficult circumstances to spread the gospel and build the church. Paul knew that because Jesus suffered to bring salvation to the world, believers doing God's work would suffer too.

Think about suffering in your own life. How do you typically respond to suffering? What does your reaction to suffering reveal about what you believe about God? What does it reveal about what you most treasure in life? Joy in suffering does not discredit grief and pain, but it gives hope in difficult times. This joy is rooted in the faithfulness of God, who ultimately does everything for His glory and our good.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

We have learned about some of Paul's most difficult experiences. Paul obeyed God's call to tell people about Jesus, but the Jews planned to kill him. He was arrested, but God protected him. Paul then preached about Jesus to governors and kings. He wasn't afraid of powerful people. Finally, Paul was sailing to Rome to see Caesar when a storm hit. What happened during the storm? (*A shipwreck.*) How did God protect Paul and the men with him? (*God saved everyone on the ship, the islanders cared for them, and Paul wasn't hurt when bit by a poisonous snake.*) What did Paul do while they waited for another ship to take them to Rome? (*Shared the gospel and healed the sick.*) Today's Bible story picks up after Paul arrived in Rome and was put in prison there. Listen carefully to see how Paul handled all of this.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Make a JOY banner (Older Students)

- ◆ Tape a large banner to the floor or along a wall at the students' height. [Write JOY in block letters across the top of the banner.] Draw a line down the middle. Invite the class to write words or draw pictures of things that make them happy on one side. On the other side, invite them to write or draw things that make them sad.
- ◆ Did you know that we can have joy in times of happiness and times of sadness? Today, we're going to hear about a time when Paul was in prison, but he still had joy. We'll learn that we can choose to be joyful even when we go through hard times.

Fear Factor (Older Students)

- ◆ Have the class sit in chairs in a circle. Choose one player to stand in the middle; remove the empty chair. Prompt the middle player to name something that might be scary. Players who agree that the thing is scary should stand up and take the seat of someone else who stood. The student in the middle should also find a seat. The player left without a chair moves to the middle of the circle and names the next scary thing. Play multiple rounds as time allows.
- ◆ Different people are scared of different things, but God is more powerful than any of them. Nothing is scary to God, and He can protect us from the things we are afraid of. Today, we will hear about a time that Paul was in prison, which would be very scary, but he still had joy. Let's find out why.

Pick a Side (Younger Students)

- ◆ Label one side of the room with a smiling face and one side with a frowning face. As you ask the questions below, invite the class to move to the side of the room that represents how they feel about each thing. Does it make them want to smile or frown?
 - ◇ How do you feel when it is raining outside?
 - ◇ How do you feel when someone asks you to share some of your lunch?
 - ◇ How do you feel when you are unfairly called out during a game?
 - ◇ How do you feel when school is canceled?
 - ◇ How do you feel when your brother or sister asks to play with you?
 - ◇ How do you feel when you are asked to read a book?
 - ◇ How do you feel when you have to share in front of the class?

- ◆ Our circumstances in life can make us happy or sad, but joy isn't based on circumstances. While he was in prison, Paul told the Philippian church to be joyful. Paul knew that true joy comes from a deep trust in Jesus, and the suffering Paul faced couldn't take away that joy.

Emoji Match (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Draw various age-appropriate emojis on sticky notes or adhesive name tags, two per emoji. Stick an emoji on each student's back. Asking only yes-or-no questions, they will try to find their match. Once they find their match, they must come up with a circumstance that best fits their emoji.
- ◆ All these emojis show us different emotions: happy, sad, angry, and so forth. Usually we feel these different emotions based on our circumstances. Maybe you got a good grade on a test so you feel happy. Or maybe your older sibling refused to share a toy with you and you felt angry. Our circumstances are constantly changing and so are our emotions. But did you know that we can experience joy all the time? Unlike other emotions, joy isn't based on our circumstances. We'll hear more in our story today.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Philippians 1:27a

Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Board Race (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Divide into two teams. Each team should line up at one end of the room. One at a time, players from each team will go to the board to write a word of the key passage in order. The first team to finish the whole key passage wins.
- ◆ For classes that have difficulty writing or reading, write out each word of the key passage on separate index cards before class. Make two sets and use magnets (or tape or sticky tack) to attach them to the board. Give each team member a card before the race and pronounce it for them. The students will race up to the board when it is time for their word.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: When should we tell others about Jesus?

A: We should always tell others about Jesus, even when it is difficult.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Paul's Joy in Prison | Philippians 1:12-30

Paul was living as a prisoner in Rome. He had done nothing wrong, but the Jewish leaders had tried to kill him because he believed and taught that Jesus had risen from the dead. Many did not believe in the resurrection. Now Paul **was waiting to meet with the emperor of Rome.**

Believers visited Paul or sent him gifts. **While in prison, Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in Philippi to thank them for sending a gift and to tell them about his work.**

Paul wrote, "I want you to know, brothers, that even though the Jews tried to stop me, everything that has happened has actually helped me tell more people the good news about Jesus. Now the

guards at the palace know the gospel, and other believers have been sharing the gospel without fear.” This all happened because Paul was a prisoner.

“Thank you for praying for me. I know that God has given me the Holy Spirit to help me. **I hope that I will never be afraid or embarrassed about anything. I want to be bold and honor Jesus, whether I live or I die.**

“For me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I live, I live for Jesus. If I die for Jesus, I will be with Him forever.” Paul said it was important to the Philippian Christians that he be alive so he could continue to help and encourage them. But he also wanted to go to heaven and be with Jesus.

“No matter what happens, live your life in a way that brings honor to the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I am with you or away, I will hear that you are working together to share the good news about Jesus.”

Paul also urged the believers to not let anyone scare them away from doing God’s work. He said, “This is the work God has given you to do—not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him.”



JESUS CONNECTION

God used Paul’s difficult circumstances to spread the gospel and build the church. Paul knew that because Jesus suffered to bring salvation to the world, believers doing God’s work would suffer too.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

DISCERNMENT – Being able to recognize what is true and false or right and wrong.

Living LifeWise

God works all things for our good, so we can discern His goodness even in hard things.

Character Connection

Have you ever talked to someone in a Halloween costume that you thought was someone else? Were you excited about a really big Christmas present that turned out to be a boring gift? Ever get a big piece of what looks like your favorite kind of pie only to discover it was another flavor entirely? Sometimes, things are just not what they seem.

That’s why we need discernment. Being able to recognize what is true or right in a situation does more than keep us from getting a gross dessert. It helps us understand how God is at work even in hard situations.

Paul was in prison when he said that he had great joy. Is that how you would see things if you were in prison? [Take quick responses.] Obviously, Paul’s joy didn’t come because he was in jail. It was because, even though he was in jail, he was seeing God at work in amazing ways. What looked at first glance like a bad situation was actually allowing more and more people to hear about Jesus. And that was a good thing. So, Paul was joyful.

Discernment means we don't just focus on what a situation looks like or feels like. It means looking for how God is at work, bringing good out of each situation. God's Spirit will help us see all the good that God is creating, and like Paul, we can experience real joy as a result.

For each situation, brainstorm 2–3 possible good things God could be doing.

- ◆ You tried out for a main role in the play, but they ask you to take a smaller role instead.
- ◆ Your mom got a new job, so now you have to watch your little sister after school.
- ◆ You forgot to do your homework, so your teacher won't let you go to recess.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ **Where was Paul when he wrote the letter to the Philippians?**

In prison in Rome, Phil. 1:13

- ◆ **Why did Paul say he had experienced difficult times?**

For God's glory, Phil. 1:12

- ◆ **Was Paul afraid or embarrassed to share the gospel?**

No, he shared it without fear, Phil. 1:14

- ◆ **What made Paul rejoice?**

People were hearing about Jesus, Phil. 1:18

- ◆ **Why did Paul think that dying was a good thing?**

Believers will be with Jesus forever when they die, Phil. 1:23

- ◆ **What kind of life did Paul encourage the believers to live?**

A life worthy of the gospel of Christ, Phil. 1:27

- ◆ **What did Paul tell the Philippians about their mission?**

To be bold and stand firm in sharing the gospel, Phil. 1:27–28

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5–10 MIN)

Emotion Ball (Older Students)

- ◆ Draw or tape faces on a beach ball representing different emotions (happy, sad, angry, confused, etc.). Instruct the class to stand in a circle and toss the ball around. When you say stop, the student with the ball should hold it with both hands. Call for the player with the ball to look at one of the faces she is touching (closest to the right thumb, for instance). Ask her how she could trust God when she is feeling that emotion. Play additional rounds as time allows.
- ◆ In this life we will have many struggles and feel different emotions. Even Paul couldn't muster up the strength on his own to have joy. Paul knew joy is found in Jesus alone, no matter what was going on in his life.

Human Tic Tac Toe (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ The book of Philippians is in the New Testament, in the division called Paul's Letters. Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison. Even in a difficult situation, Paul found joy in Jesus. Position nine chairs or rubber dots in a 3-by-3 grid on the floor. Form two teams. Give each player on the first team a piece of paper labeled X. Give the second team papers labeled O. Ask a review question to

the first team. If they answer correctly, a player may sit in any chair. If they answer incorrectly, play passes to the next team. The first team to seat three of its players in a row (vertical, horizontal or diagonal) wins.

What's Wrong? (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ This game is like 20 Questions. The teacher will pretend to have a specific sickness or problem, such as the flu, strep throat, a broken bone, a big test, a lost pet, etc. The class must ask yes-or-no questions to figure out what is wrong. Every time they ask a question that requires a yes answer, follow your yes with "but I still have joy in Jesus."
- ◆ Wow, you were great at figuring out what was wrong with me. Even though I had problems, what did I keep telling you? (*I still had joy in Jesus.*) In today's lesson, we learned that Paul felt the same way. How do you think he was able to feel joy in spite of all the difficult things he went through?

Mosaic Cross (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Give each student a pencil and a piece of heavyweight paper. Lead them through the steps to create a mosaic cross. Consider preparing a mosaic cross before the session as an example.
 - ◇ Draw the outline of a large cross on your paper. Make it big enough that you'll have space to decorate with paper.
 - ◇ Tear pieces of foil and tissue paper and pass them out.
 - ◇ Use glue to fill the outline with the torn foil and tissue paper. Let dry completely.
- ◆ We tore tissue paper to create these beautiful crosses. Sometimes our lives feel like these torn pieces of paper, especially when we are sad or angry or going through a hard time. But look at our beautiful mosaic that we have made with all that torn up paper! God can take hurting people and turn us into something beautiful when we put our hope in Jesus. Because of what Jesus has done for us, we can be joyful in any situation.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ Emotions (Older Students)
- ◆ Draw the Emotion (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for giving us joy. You are always in control, and we know that we can trust in You with our lives. Thank You for giving us life in Jesus and giving us hope for eternity with You. Amen.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FOR REVIEW ONLY

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why was Paul joyful, even in prison?
- How have you seen God bring about good through difficult circumstances?
- What does it mean to be joyful? How is joy different from happiness?

PAUL'S JOY IN PRISON

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-30

MAIN POINT: WHILE HE WAS IN PRISON, PAUL TOLD THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH TO BE JOYFUL.

Paul was living as a prisoner in Rome. He was waiting to meet with the emperor of Rome. While in prison, Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in Philippi to thank them for sending a gift and to tell them about his work.

Paul wrote, "I want you to know, brothers, that even though the Jews tried to stop me, everything that has happened has actually helped me tell more people the good news about Jesus.

"I hope that I will never be afraid or embarrassed about anything. I want to be bold and honor Jesus, whether I live or I die.

"For me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I live, I live for Jesus. If I die for Jesus, I will be with Him forever.

"No matter what happens, live your life in a way that brings honor to the gospel of Christ."

Paul also urged the believers to not let anyone scare them away from doing God's work. He said, "This is the work God has given you to do—not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him."

Jesus Connection: God used Paul's difficult circumstances to spread the gospel and build the church. Paul knew that because Jesus suffered to bring salvation to the world, believers doing God's work would suffer too.

Key Passage: Philippians 1:27a – Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

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Beside each description, draw a face showing how you might feel in that situation.

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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1. The family car breaks down on your vacation.

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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5. Your mom is cooking your least favorite meal.

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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2. You win tickets to an amusement park.

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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6. A friend asks you about Jesus.

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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3. Your team won the championship.

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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7. Your sister wants to play with you.

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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4. School is closed due to weather.

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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8. You're put in prison for telling others about Jesus.



LETTERS FROM PRISON

Use the key to decode part of Paul's letter from prison.

A	-	L	-	-	-
C	-	M	-	-	-
D	-	N	-	-	-
E	-	O	-	-	-
F	-	R	-	-	-
G	-	S	-	-	-
H	-	T	-	-	-
I	-	V	-	-	-



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DRAW THE EMOTION

INSTRUCTIONS: Add faces to the people below to show how they might feel in their situations.



KEY PASSAGE:

Philippians 1:27a – Just one thing: As citizens of Heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- When should we tell others about Jesus? We should always tell others about Jesus, even when it is difficult.

BIBLE STORY:

PAUL'S JOY IN PRISON

- Paul remained a prisoner for a long time.
- Paul wrote letters to churches since he could not visit them.
- While he was in prison, Paul told the Philippian church to be joyful.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

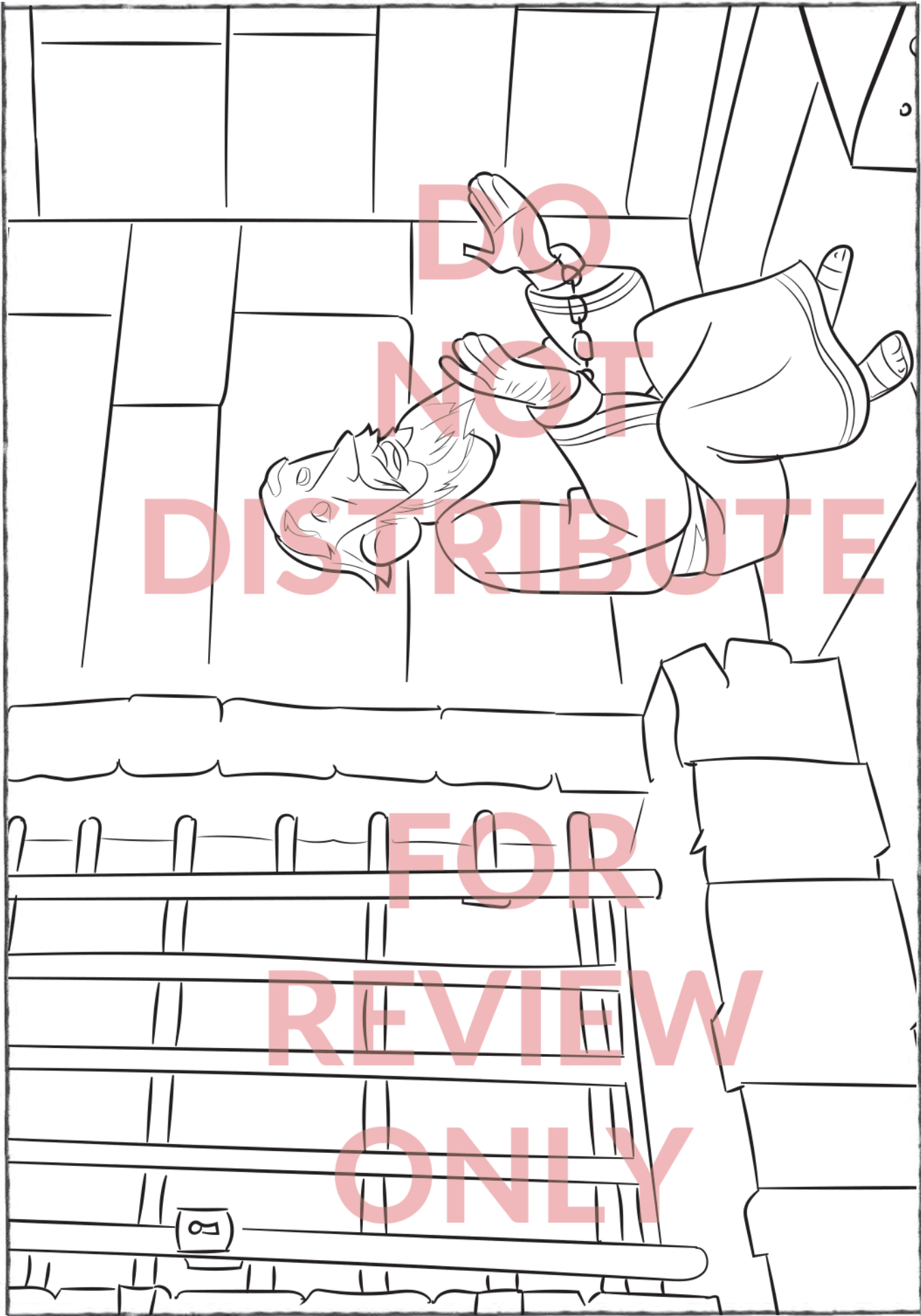
- Where did Paul's joy come from?
- Do you think you would feel joyful while in prison?
- How can we have the same joy Paul felt?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Take your family to get a treat, like ice cream, and discuss the differences between feeling happy and having lasting joy.
- Help your kids write letters to loved ones whom they haven't seen in a while.

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WHILE HE WAS IN PRISON, PAUL TOLD
THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH TO BE JOYFUL.

L 114 Paul's Joy in Prison | DISCERNMENT

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LESSON 115: FORGIVENESS

PHILEMON

Philemon 8–22

PHILEMON



- ◆ Philemon 8–22
- ◆ Big Picture Q&A: How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return? We remember God's truth, grow in godliness and spread the gospel.
- ◆ Key Passage: 2 Timothy 3:16–17 – All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

JESUS CONNECTION



Paul offered to pay Onesimus' debt to make peace between him and Philemon. In this way, Paul acted like Jesus, who makes peace between God and man. Jesus took the punishment we deserve for our sin. He paid our debt so that we can be forgiven and welcomed by God.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

FORGIVENESS – Letting go of a grudge against someone who has wronged me.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Paul was a prisoner under house arrest in Rome when a man named Onesimus (oh NESS ih muhs) came to visit him. Onesimus was a slave who had run away from a wealthy man named Philemon.

As it turned out, Paul was a friend of Philemon. So, when Paul told Onesimus the good news about Jesus and Onesimus believed, Paul desired forgiveness and reconciliation between Onesimus and Philemon—now brothers in Christ.

So, Paul wrote a letter and told Onesimus to take it to Philemon. The book of Philemon is the letter written by Paul to Philemon. Though Onesimus had become dear to him and Paul wanted Onesimus to stay with him in Rome, Paul sent him back to Philemon with his letter.

In the letter, Paul urged Philemon to forgive Onesimus and treat him as a fellow brother in Christ. Paul even offered to pay Onesimus's debt for him. Though Paul could have used his authority as an apostle of Christ to force Philemon to do what he wanted, Paul instead appealed to him as a friend and a fellow believer. He urged Philemon to treat Onesimus as if he were Paul himself—with love and kindness.

Paul offered to pay Onesimus' debt to make peace between him and Philemon. In this way, Paul acted like Jesus, who makes peace between God and humanity. Jesus took the punishment we deserve for our sin, paying our debt so that we can be forgiven and welcomed into God's family as brothers and sisters of Jesus (Heb. 2:11).

Paul's letter serves as a reminder to us that everyone is equal before Jesus. People from completely different backgrounds—like Paul, a former Jewish leader, Onesimus, a runaway slave, and Philemon, a Gentile slave-owner—are brought together by the gospel under the lordship of Jesus Christ. In light of God's love for us, we can be loving, kind and forgiving to our brothers and sisters in Christ for the glory of God.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Paul was a missionary, which means that he shared the gospel with people who didn't know Jesus. Paul loved Jesus more than anything in the world, and he wanted to tell everyone he could about how they could be saved from their sin. Many people heard the good news and believed! But not everyone liked what Paul had to say, so Paul had been put in prison. Do you remember where Paul was taken and put in prison? (*Rome*.) Why was he taken to Rome? (*So Caesar, the emperor, could hear his case.*) Even while he was in chains, Paul wrote letters to the believers he had met to encourage them in their faith. Do you remember any of the churches Paul wrote to? (*Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, Galatia, Philippi, etc.*) Today's story is about a letter he wrote to his friend Philemon.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Welcome Sign (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Lay out poster board or a large sheet of paper and encourage the class to work together to create a *Welcome* banner for the classroom or hallway. Help them come up with a plan, theme and design. Ask what would make people want to come into their classroom or hallway? When they finish, commend the students on working together.
- ◆ Making people feel welcome is important, especially at Bible class and churches. It helps people feel comfortable and encourages them to learn more about Jesus. To make your signs, you had to work together as a team. Did everyone agree on every decision? Most likely not. You might be tempted to hold a grudge when you don't get your way, but today we will learn about welcoming people and also why we should forgive others when we have a disagreement.

Seventy Times Seven (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before the session, put seven items in one bag and 490 items in another. Ask the class how many times they should forgive someone, such as a friend or a brother or sister—once or twice a day? How about seven times a day? Ask a volunteer to find and read Matthew 18:21–22 in the Bible. Let students compare the bags of items.
- ◆ Jesus told Peter to forgive seventy times seven times. Seventy times seven is 490. Jesus didn't mean to forgive that many times and then stop; Jesus wants us to forgive without limit. Jesus forgives us without limit—for our past, present and future sins—because He loves us. We can forgive others because we have been forgiven. In today's Bible story, Paul wrote a letter about forgiveness. We'll find out what he said.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

2 Timothy 3:16–17

All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Hand Motions (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Form groups of students. Assign each group a section of the key passage and instruct them to create hand motions for that section. [*Suggested sections: All Scripture/is inspired by God/and is profitable for teaching/for rebuking/for correcting /for training in righteousness /so that the man of God/may be complete/equipped for every good work.*] Invite each group to teach their motions to the other groups. Encourage students to perform the hand motions as the class recites the whole verse aloud together.

Funny Voices (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Have students say the verse together several times, using different silly voices (big giant, commercial advertisement, pinching nose, etc.) each time.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return?

A: We remember God's truth, grow in godliness and spread the gospel.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Paul's Letter to Philemon | Philemon 8–22

When Paul was a prisoner in Rome, he met a man named Onesimus (oh NESS ih muhs). **Onesimus was a servant. He had run away from his owner, Philemon.** Philemon was Paul's friend and a leader in the church at Colossae.

Paul told Onesimus the good news about Jesus, and Onesimus believed in Jesus. He helped Paul, and Paul wanted Onesimus to stay with him. **But Paul knew Onesimus needed to do the right thing: to go back to Philemon and ask for forgiveness. So, Paul wrote a letter and told Onesimus to take the letter back to Philemon.**

"Dear Philemon, I am writing to you because I love you. **I want you to do the right thing.** I am getting old, and I am in prison because I tell people about Jesus. **I met Onesimus and told him about Jesus, and he believed.** I want him to stay with me, but I want your permission first.

"Onesimus is a believer now. Maybe this is why he left you for a little while—so that he could come back to you as a brother instead of a servant. He is our friend and brother in Christ. Please welcome him like you would welcome me. If he owes you anything, I will pay it.

"Philemon, I would be so happy if you agree to do this. I know you will do what is right." Paul asked Philemon to get a room ready for him. Paul hoped to visit Philemon soon.



JESUS CONNECTION

Paul offered to pay Onesimus' debt to make peace between him and Philemon. In this way, Paul acted like Jesus, who makes peace between God and man. Jesus took the punishment we deserve for our sin. He paid our debt so that we can be forgiven and welcomed by God.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3-4 MIN)

FORGIVENESS – Letting go of a grudge against someone who has wronged me.

Living LifeWise

Because Jesus died on the cross for our sins, God forgives us and helps us model forgiveness to others.

Character Connection

We all have to apologize at times. But not all apologies are the same. Sometimes we're half-hearted and don't really mean it. Or we apologize just to get out of trouble. But forgiveness isn't about getting out of trouble; it's about restoring peace to a broken relationship.

Paul wanted to help Philemon and Onesimus make peace. It wouldn't be easy. Onesimus had run away and may have even stolen money from Philemon. But Paul knew it was possible with God's help.

God forgives our sin because of Jesus's death and resurrection. His Spirit will help us forgive those who hurt us, like Philemon. He helps us admit our mistakes and ask for forgiveness, like Onesimus had to. And God may even use us to help make peace between other people, like Paul. God is a god of peace, and the road to peace requires forgiveness.

Often the first step in restoring peace is an apology. A true apology has 4 steps.

1. **Say:** "I'm sorry." Start with honesty. Say you're sorry and mean it.
2. **Be specific:** "I'm sorry for ..." State what you did or said. Don't blame or shift focus. "I'm sorry for talking over you," or, "I'm sorry that I lied," or, "I'm sorry I broke your toy."
3. **Recognize the hurt:** "It was wrong because ..." Admit that the other person was hurt by what you did. "I'm sorry for what I said at recess. I was trying to be funny, but I hurt your feelings."
4. **Ask for forgiveness:** "Please forgive me." This part is the key and very hard. We can admit what we did and how it hurt them, but they might choose not to forgive us. Still, we need to ask if we want to restore the relationship.

[Divide into two groups.] Let's practice the four-step apology. I'll read a situation and you need to create an apology. Group A will act out a bad apology for that situation, and group B will act out a four-step apology. [Alternate groups each time.]

- ◆ You break your brother's new toy before he even gets to play with it.
- ◆ You accidentally kick a ball into a classmate's face during kickball.
- ◆ You told your mom you would clean your room, but you played video games instead.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ Who wrote the Book of Philemon?

Paul

- ◆ Which Bible division is the book of Philemon in?

Paul's Letters

- ◆ Which book comes before Philippians?

Titus

- ◆ Which book comes after Philippians?

Hebrews

- ◆ Where was Paul when he wrote the letter to Philemon?

He was in prison, Philem. 9

- ◆ Who was Onesimus?

A servant to Philemon, Philem. 16

- ◆ When did Onesimus meet Paul?

When Paul was imprisoned in Rome, Philem. 10

- ◆ What happened when Paul and Onesimus met?

Paul told Onesimus about Jesus and he became a believer, Philem. 16

- ◆ What did Paul ask Onesimus to do?

To ask Philemon to forgive him for running away, Philem. 18

- ◆ What did Paul encourage Philemon to do?

Forgive Onesimus and treat him as a brother in Christ, Philem. 16–17

- ◆ What did Paul want permission from Philemon for?

Keep Onesimus in Rome with him, Philem. 10–14

- ◆ What did Paul offer to pay?

Any debt that Onesimus owed to Philemon, Philem. 18–19

- ◆ How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return?

We remember God's truth, grow in godliness and spread the gospel.

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Paying Your Debt (Older Students)

- ◆ Before class, print and cut out multiple copies of the "Dollar Bills" printable. Ask the class what kind of things they like to buy. Write their answers on a dry erase board and assign a dollar amount to each item. Write up other expenses their families might have (utility bills, gas, car payments, food, rent or house payment) and assign made-up monthly amounts for each item. Add up the grand monthly total. Distribute the bills to the class, giving each student a random amount. Instruct them to count up the money they have. [Note: Plan ahead so their money seems like a lot, but is less than your monthly total.]
- ◆ So, what happens at the end of the month if someone's expenses are higher than the money he has? (He goes into debt.) Debt means a person owes more than he has. What happens if a person

can't pay his debt? (*He loses things, for example: his phone, car or house can be taken away.*) What if someone paid your bills for you? (*The debt would be forgiven because someone else paid it.*)

- ◆ Paul asked Philemon to forgive his servant as a Christian brother. Paul offered to pay Onesimus' debt to make peace between him and Philemon. In this way, Paul acted like Jesus, who makes peace between God and man. Jesus took the punishment we deserve for our sin, paying our debt so that we can be forgiven and welcomed by God. Encourage students to place one of their dollar bills in their Bible as a reminder that Jesus has paid their debt.

Charades (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Ask a volunteer to tell which part of the Bible Philemon is in (*New Testament*) and which division (*Paul's Letters*). The book of Philemon is one of the letters in the New Testament written by Paul. Many of the New Testament books are letters for either specific people or the believers in a certain area. But these books are also for us today. God's Word speaks to us even though it was written many years ago because it comes directly from God. Let's see how much we can remember of what we learned during the Bible story today.
- ◆ Play charades using words from the story. For each word that is guessed, ask the class to explain how that word relates to the Bible story. [*Suggested words: servant, letter, forgive, pay, run away, friend, love, Jesus.*]

The Act of Forgiveness (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Form groups of three or four students. Instruct them to work together to think of a real-life scenario of forgiveness, something they might encounter during their day. [*Examples: A sibling borrows a favorite shirt and returns it with a stain; a friend promises to meet you at the mall but never comes; a parent is unable to attend your soccer game.*] Invite them to plan a skit showing the offense and how someone can extend forgiveness. Allow each group to act out their skit for the other groups. Thank the groups for their creativity and their teamwork on this activity.
- ◆ It's not always easy to forgive in real-life situations. But we can forgive others because God has forgiven us so much. Paul told Philemon to forgive his servant as a Christian brother. In forgiving someone, we show God's love to the person we forgive. When you are the person who did wrong, pray for the courage to apologize and ask forgiveness of the person you wronged. That is a great first step in restoring your relationship with the other person.

Returning Servant Relay (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Form two teams and instruct the teams to line up on one side of the classroom. Choose one person on each team to be Paul, who will stand across from his team at the opposite end of the room. Paul's job is to write one word of Ephesians 4:32 ("Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.") on each card and hand it to the servant when they come. They must take it back to the other side of the room and sit down. When they sit down, the next "servant" in line will go get the next word from Paul. The first team that completes the relay wins.
- ◆ Paul told Philemon to forgive his servant as a Christian brother. Paul reminded Philemon that God had forgiven him, so now he must forgive others. It's not always easy to forgive people, especially if they hurt us deeply. Because of what Jesus has done for us, we can show forgiveness and grace to others.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

♦ **A Way Back (Older Students)**

✧ Answers: 1. *Philemon*; 2. *brother*; 3. *peace*; 4. *punishment*; 5. *debt*; 6. *forgiven*.

♦ **Where's Onesimus? (Younger Students)**

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for inviting us to be part of Your family through Jesus. Help us to love others well this week. Help us show forgiveness when others hurt us and seek forgiveness when we hurt others. We pray that You would use us to welcome others into Your family as we share the gospel. Amen.

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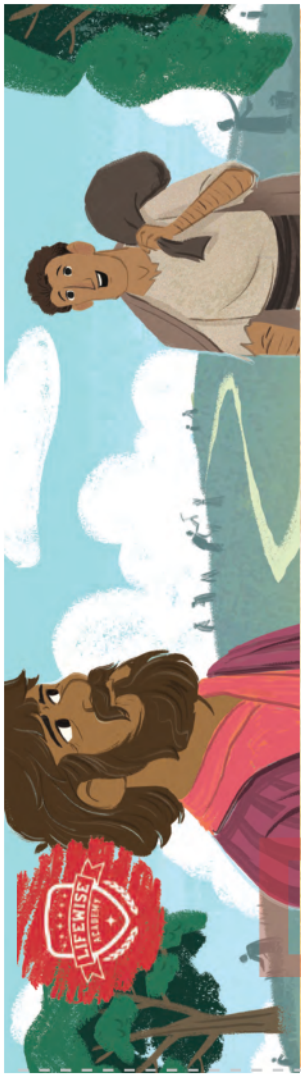
Journal Page

Write about a time you faced consequences for disobedience. Sin is disobeying God. Like the people of Judah, we deserve to be punished for sin. Thank God for sending Jesus to rescue us from sin!

FOR REVIEW ONLY

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why did God allow the king of Babylon to attack Judah?
- Did God still love His people? How do you know?
- Will we be punished too for our sin? Why or why not?



PHILEMON

PHILEMON 8-22

MAIN POINT: PAUL TOLD PHILEMON TO FORGIVE HIS SERVANT AS A CHRISTIAN BROTHER.

When Paul was a prisoner in Rome, he met a man named Onesimus. Onesimus was a servant. He had run away from his owner, Philemon.

Paul told Onesimus the good news about Jesus, and Onesimus believed in Jesus. Paul knew Onesimus needed to go back to Philemon and ask for forgiveness. So Paul wrote a letter and told Onesimus to take the letter back to Philemon.

"Dear Philemon, I want you to do the right thing. I met Onesimus and told him about Jesus, and he believed."

"Maybe this is why he left you for a little while—so that he could come back to you as a brother instead of a servant. He is our friend and brother in Christ. Please welcome him like you would welcome me. If he owes you anything, I will pay it."

Jesus Connection: Paul offered to pay Onesimus' debt to make peace between him and Philemon. In this way, Paul acted like Jesus, who makes peace between God and man. Jesus took the punishment we deserve for our sin. He paid our debt so that we can be forgiven and welcomed by God.

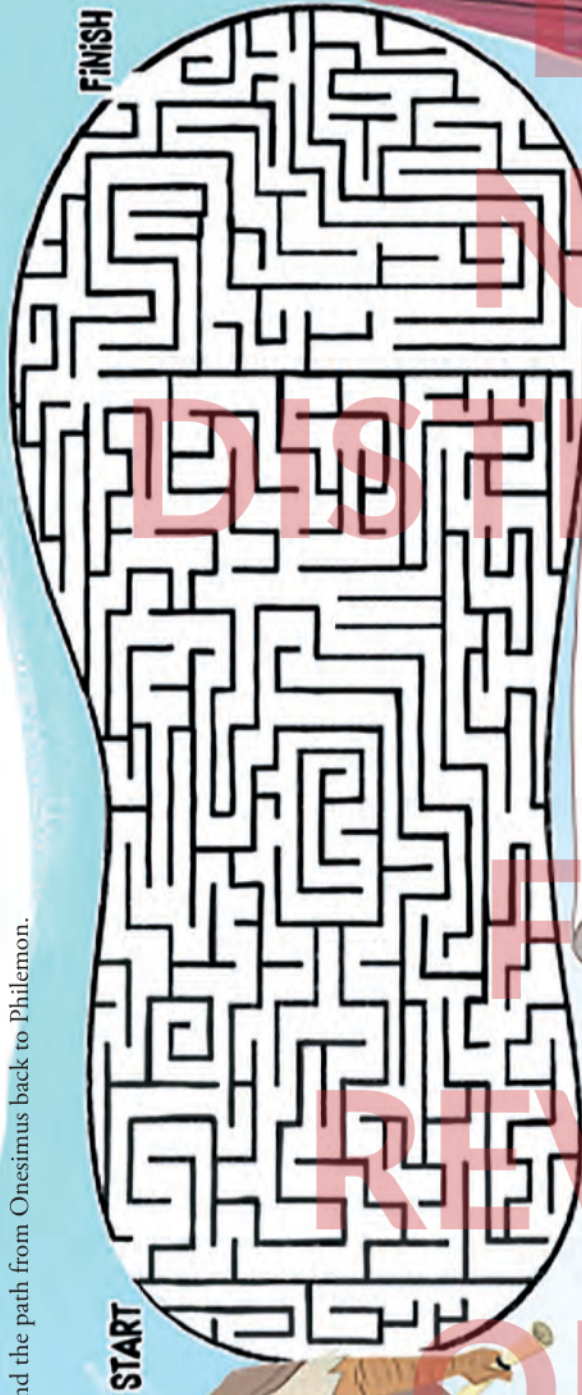
Key Passage: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

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A WAY BACK

Find the path from Onesimus back to Philemon.



FORGIVEN AND FREE

Unscramble the letters to fill in the missing words.

1. EMHLHIOP 4. IMHUNTENPS
2. HBRROET 5. DTEB
3. AECPE 6. EGVOFNRI

PAUL ENCOURAGED _____ 1. _____ TO FORGIVE ONESIMUS AND
TREAT HIM AS A _____ 2. _____ IN CHRIST. PAUL OFFERED TO PAY
ONESIMUS' DEBT TO MAKE PEACE BETWEEN HIM AND PHILEMON. IN THIS
WAY, PAUL ACTED LIKE JESUS, WHO MAKES _____ 3. _____
BETWEEN GOD AND MAN. JESUS TOOK THE _____ 4. _____ WE
DESERVE FOR OUR SIN, PAYING OUR _____ 5. _____ SO THAT WE CAN
BE _____ 6. _____ AND WELCOMED BY GOD.

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WHERE'S ONESIMUS?

INSTRUCTIONS: Look at the picture below and find Onesimus. You'll know it's him based on the picture key.



KEY PASSAGE:

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return? We remember God's truth, grow in godliness and spread the gospel.

BIBLE STORY:

PAUL'S LETTER TO PHILEMON

- Onesimus was a servant for Philemon.
- Onesimus ran away and met Paul.
- Paul led Onesimus to Jesus.
- Paul told Philemon to forgive his servant as a Christian brother.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why did Paul ask Philemon to treat Onesimus as a brother?
- What did Paul offer to do for Onesimus?
- Who paid our debts to God?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Have a family dinner. Take turns serving by bringing drinks, delivering food, and so on. Compare and contrast how it would feel to be a servant and to be part of the family.

Philemon

L 115 | FORGIVENESS

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PAUL TOLD PHILEMON TO FORGIVE HIS
SERVANT AS A CHRISTIAN BROTHER.

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Dollar Bills

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.
L 115 Philemon | FORGIVENESS

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LESSON 116: HOPE

PAUL GAVE HOPE

1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11

PAUL GAVE HOPE



- ◆ 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11
- ◆ Big Picture Q&A: How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return? We remember God's truth, grow in godliness and spread the gospel.
- ◆ Key Passage: 2 Timothy 3:16–17 – All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

JESUS CONNECTION



The prophets in the Old Testament told about the Day of the Lord, a day when God would come to judge the world and save His people. Paul said that in the future, on the Day of the Lord, Jesus will return for His people and judge the wicked. Believers live with hope, knowing that Jesus will come again.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

HOPE – Expecting God will do what is best in every situation.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Consider how your life would change if you could know the future—if you could accurately predict the weather or the outcome of a baseball game. If you could know how your life is going to turn out, would you live today differently? In the bigger picture of God's plan for the world, we do know the future. God reveals the outcome of His plan for humanity in His Word.

In the book of 1 Thessalonians, Paul writes about the future to encourage believers facing persecution. Their hope as believers then is the same as our hope as believers today. We look forward to a final resurrection, the return of Jesus and the judgment of the world.

Around AD 50, the city of Thessalonica was filled with those who worshiped idols, Greek and Roman gods, and even the Roman emperor himself. So, when Paul started a church there, he quickly faced persecution and was forced to flee the city. Even though he could not return, Paul still loved the young church and was concerned for them, so he sent Timothy to check on the believers.

Timothy reported back with good news—though the church was suffering from persecution, they were holding tightly to their faith. They did have some misunderstandings about Christianity, especially the return of Jesus, but they were working hard for the Lord. Paul wrote a letter to encourage the believers and to clear up misunderstandings about the future and what happens when Christians die.

Perhaps Paul's greatest message was about the return of Jesus. On that day, Paul said, believers will be freed from their sufferings. On the Day of the Lord, Jesus will return for His people and judge the wicked. That's a promise we can still claim today. Paul's letter gave believers hope. The hope we find in the Bible is

stronger than just wanting something to happen; biblical hope is expecting with confidence because we know God is faithful and true.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Paul visited many cities as he traveled, planting churches along the way. He shared the gospel everywhere he went, and in each area people put their faith in Jesus. Paul couldn't be everywhere at once, so he wrote letters to teach the believers more about Jesus. Last time, we learned about a letter Paul wrote to Philemon. Do you remember what Paul wrote about? (*Philemon's runaway slave.*) What was the slave's name? (*Onesimus.*) What did Paul ask Philemon to do? (*Forgive Onesimus, love him as a brother in Christ and allow him to return to help Paul.*) Today, our story is about hope. Hope is more than just wanting something to happen; hope is expecting that God will do what is best in every situation because He is faithful and true.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Key Words (Older Students)

- ◆ Form two or more teams. Invite the class to play a fill-in-the-blank game with key words from today's story. On the board or a large paper, draw a blank for each letter in the word or phrase. Allow the first team to guess a letter. If they are correct, they get to guess again. If they are incorrect, play passes to the other (or next) team. Teams get 5 points for every correct letter and 10 points for solving the puzzle. Play multiple rounds as time allows. [Example words: Paul, Thessalonica, Day of the Lord, return, hope, Heaven.]
- ◆ Great job guessing some key words from today's Bible story! Listen as we hear the story to see how all these words come together in an encouraging message of hope for all believers.

What Do You Hope to Be? (Older Students)

- ◆ Invite students to take turns drawing on the board or on a large paper what they hope to be when they grow up. See if the class can identify the drawing. Continue until each student has a turn or as time allows.
- ◆ God has a special and unique plan for your life. It's fun to think about what gifts He has given you and how you can use them now and in the future. God also has a plan that is the same for all of us, and that's to trust Jesus and be with Him when Jesus returns. We will learn more about that through Paul's letter to the Thessalonians.

What Makes It Better? (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Present the class with scenarios in which there is a problem or difficult situation. Invite students to offer suggestions on how to handle their emotions. Talk about each idea suggested.
- ◆ Suggested scenarios:
 - ◇ A bully shoved you, and you scraped your knee falling down.
 - ◇ Your grandmother has trouble walking up stairs.
 - ◇ Your pet died.

- ◆ Because of sin our whole world is broken. We get hurt and sick, things wear out and break, and people and animals die. But there is hope because Jesus has promised to make all things brand new one day! In our story today we'll hear that Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to have hope.

Future Hope Charades (Younger Students)

- ◆ Ask the class to think about what they want to be when they grow up. One at a time, students will silently act out their desired profession for the class. The rest of the class will try to guess what it is. Play as time allows.
- ◆ We all have hopes for our future. Some are small, like what we're going to eat for dinner. Others are big, like what kind of job we want to have or where we want to live. Sometimes when we hope for something in the future, we may be able to do things now to prepare for it. Jesus has promised that He will return to us one day. This promise gives us hope. The hope we get from Jesus is more than just wanting something to happen; it's knowing that it will happen because Jesus keeps all His promises.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Fill in the Blank (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before class, write a phrase of the key passage on a dry erase board or large paper, leaving a blank for a keyword in that phrase. Draw small lines to represent each letter in the missing word. Draw a picture on the board, such as ice cream or a snowman, depending on the time of year. Invite students to guess a letter. If the letter is in the word, place it in the correct spot. If it is not, erase one part of the object. If the entire object is erased, the teacher wins the game. Review the entire key passage in sections this way. Give students helpful hints before beginning the game (e.g., that it's smart to start by guessing vowels).

Key Passage Order (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before class, put one word or phrase of the verse on separate index cards. If your class is large, make multiple sets. Read the key passage together as a class. Say one phrase, then have students repeat you. Work your way through the passage by speaking and repeating. Then, hand an index card to each student. If students have difficulty reading, make sure they know what their card says. Have students work together to put the verse in order using the key passage poster or a Bible.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return?

A: We remember God's truth, grow in godliness, and spread the gospel.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Paul Gave Hope | 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11

About 20 years after Jesus died on the cross and rose again, Paul traveled to the city of Thessalonica. The people there worshiped idols. Some of them even worshiped the Roman emperor. Paul told the people the good news about Jesus, and many people believed in Jesus. Paul started the church in Thessalonica, but some people did not like Paul or his teachings, and they forced him out of the city.

Paul worried about the people in Thessalonica. They had not been believers for very long. So Paul sent his friend Timothy to see how they were doing. Timothy brought back good news. Even though the Thessalonians faced suffering for their faith, they did not give up. Paul wrote a letter to encourage them. He told them that Jesus will return someday. On that day, Paul said, believers will be freed from their sufferings! This message gave them great hope.

Paul wrote to the believers at the church in Thessalonica to help them know what is true and to teach them what happened to believers who had died. The people could grieve with hope. Because Jesus died and rose again, God would bring with Him those who had died—if they trusted in Jesus.

Paul shared that when Jesus returns, the Lord Himself will come down from Heaven with a shout and the trumpet call of God. Those believers who have died will be raised to life first. Then, believers who are still alive will be raised up together to meet the Lord in the air. We will live with Him forever!

Jesus' return fills believers with hope and excitement. But Paul warned that it would not be the same for unbelievers. Those who do not accept that Jesus took the punishment for sin will have to take the punishment themselves.

Jesus is coming again, but Paul taught that no one knows when He will return. The Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night, when you do not expect it. So be ready. God has promised us eternal life; He has saved us through His Son, Jesus. Whether we are alive or dead when Jesus returns, He will bring all believers home with Him forever.

Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to be prepared for the Day of the Lord, saying, "Stay alert and self-controlled. Put on the armor of God: faith, love and the helmet of the hope of salvation. Keep encouraging one another because we have this future hope."

JESUS CONNECTION



The prophets in the Old Testament told about the Day of the Lord, a day when God would come to judge the world and save His people. Paul said that in the future, on the Day of the Lord, Jesus will return for His people and judge the wicked. Believers live with hope, knowing that Jesus will come again.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

HOPE – Expecting God will do what is best in every situation.

Living LifeWise

Jesus will return someday, so we can have hope even when things are hard.

Character Connection

Do you ever worry? Lots of people do. What kinds of things do people worry about? [*Take answers.*] What kinds of things do we hope will happen instead? [*Examples: good things, win the lottery, have an easy life, etc.*]

We all have a tendency to worry. We worry about today, and we wonder about the future. The Thessalonians were wondering. Things were hard, and they were suffering. So, Paul wanted to make sure they understood what God was planning so they would have hope like he did.

Paul had hope because Jesus is alive and ruling over everything. And he had hope because Jesus will come back one day to be our King and take His people home to be with Him forever. We can face every day, good ones and hard ones, because Jesus is alive and taking care of us. And we don't have to worry about the future because we already know what the future holds—Jesus!

Jesus is our ultimate hope. Today may be hard. We may struggle with school, friends or life at home. We may get sick or watch someone we love suffer. We may just face boring everyday life. These things can make us feel anxious, unseen or unloved.

But we don't have to worry about today or the future, because we know that Jesus is coming again. Instead of worrying, we can pray about our fears and ask the Holy Spirit to remind us of our hope in Jesus. He keeps all of His promises and takes care of us, no matter what. In Him our future is secure, so we can have hope, even when things are hard.

I'm going to name something that people often worry about and two responses. You decide which option expresses hope and which one expresses worry.

- ◆ Doing well
 - ◇ We have a big test coming up, and I'm really nervous about it
 - ◇ I want to do well on our big test, but I've studied for it, and I've prayed about it, and I know God will help me do my best.
- ◆ Scary Things
 - ◇ I watched a scary video, and now I can't fall asleep because I'm afraid I'll have a bad dream.
 - ◇ God is with me and always takes care of me, so I'm going to ask Him to give me peace and help me not have any scary dreams.
- ◆ Bad Things
 - ◇ If my dad loses his job, I believe God will take care of us and provide a new job for him.
 - ◇ My parents were talking about my dad maybe losing his job, and I'm not sure what's going to happen.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ Who wrote the book of 1 Thessalonians?

Paul

- ◆ Which Bible division is the book of 1 Thessalonians in?
Paul's Letters
- ◆ Which book comes before 1 Thessalonians?
Colossians
- ◆ Which book comes after 1 Thessalonians?
2 Thessalonians
- ◆ Why wasn't Paul able to stay or go back and visit the believers in Thessalonica?
People in the city prevented him from coming, 1 Thess. 2:18-19
- ◆ Whom did Paul send to see how the Thessalonian church was doing?
Timothy, 1 Thess. 3:2
- ◆ How were the Thessalonians treated because of their faith in Jesus?
They were persecuted, or made to suffer, 1 Thess. 1:6, 3:4
- ◆ What will happen when Jesus returns?
Believers will live with Jesus, 1 Thess. 5:9-10
- ◆ Why can we have hope when other believers die?
Jesus died, was raised to life and is coming again. When Jesus returns, believers who have died will be raised to life, 1 Thess. 4:13-18
- ◆ What is the Day of the Lord?
The day Jesus returns to the earth, 1 Thess 4:15-5:2
- ◆ What will happen first when Jesus returns?
Believers who have already died will be made alive, 1 Thess. 4:16
- ◆ What will happen second when Jesus returns?
All believers will be caught up in the air with Jesus, 1 Thess. 4:17
- ◆ Where will Jesus take believers?
To be with Him forever, 1 Thess. 4:17
- ◆ How does Paul describe Jesus' return?
Like a thief in the night, 1 Thess. 5:2
- ◆ How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return?
We remember God's truth, grow in godliness and spread the gospel.

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Ticking Musical Chairs (Older Students)

- ◆ Before class, write the word *Eternity* on a piece of paper and post it on the wall. Form a circle of chairs with one fewer chair than the number of students. Instruct the class to walk clockwise around the chairs while you make a ticking sound. When you stop, students should sit in a chair as quickly as they can without hurting anyone. Say to the student left without a seat, "Your time on Earth is up. Welcome to eternity." The student must go stand next to the eternity sign. Remove a chair and play again. Have all students that have gone to "eternity" help you make the ticking noise for subsequent rounds. Continue until there is one player left.

- ◆ In that game, none of you knew exactly when your time on earth would be over. You each had to be ready at all times for the end of the round. In a way, that's similar to how we live our lives. We don't know when our time on Earth will be over. Once our time on this Earth is over, we can no longer make a choice to believe in Jesus or tell other people about Him. What should we do while waiting for Jesus to return? We remember God's truth, grow in godliness, and spread the gospel.

Pictionary (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before class, prepare index cards with words or phrases related to the Bible story. Form two teams. The first player will choose an index card and draw a picture on the board to represent that word or phrase. If her team guesses it correctly, they win one point. If not, the other team can try to steal the point. Play then passes to the other team. After each word or phrase has been revealed, ask the class how it was used in the Bible story. [Suggested words: *Jesus, letter, good news, heaven, thief, night, Paul, waiting.*]

Bible Trivia (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Form two teams. Make sure each team has access to a Bible to look up answers. One student from each team will come forward. Ask a review question. Once you have finished the question, students may ring a bell or be the first to grab an object placed in the middle to respond. If the answer is correct, that team receives a point. If not, the other player may answer to steal the point. The team with the most points wins.

Cards of Encouragement (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Help the class think of people they can create a card for. Consider making cards for staff members at school, neighbors or family members who may need encouragement. Challenge the students to do their best in creating their cards, as these cards can make a big difference in someone's day. Suggest that they pray for the person receiving the card and deliver their cards this week. The next time you see your class, ask them when they delivered their cards.
- ◆ Paul truly cared about the people of Thessalonica. He took time to write them a letter to encourage them when they were going through a hard time. Don't you think that meant a lot to the people when they received his letter? We have done the same for our neighbors, friends and family. Let's remember to pray that our cards will brighten someone's day and remind him or her that true hope is found in Jesus.

Thief in the Night (Younger Students)

- ◆ Give each student a clothespin to clip on their clothing. Instruct the class to spread out around the room and close their eyes. Silently choose one student to be the "thief." The thief will steal a clothespin from someone else and return to his place. The player whose clothespin was stolen must try to guess who the thief is. Return clothespins and play as time allows.
- ◆ Paul encouraged the Thessalonians by reminding them that Jesus will return. Jesus' return will come like a thief in the night—not because he is sneaking or because He wants to do something wrong, but because no one can predict exactly when Jesus will appear. Even though we don't know the date or time when Jesus will come back, we know that He will because He has promised to return for His people. Instead of worrying about the exact date, we can live lives that honor and glorify Him now and make the most of our time on this Earth! How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return? We remember God's truth, grow in godliness and spread the gospel.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ♦ What Paul Gave (Older Students)
- ♦ Hopeful Questions (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for using Paul to encourage the Thessalonians so many years ago, and thank You that these words still encourage us today. Because we know You will return as You promised, we have hope for our future. Help us to share that hope with everyone we meet. Amen.

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- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FOR REVIEW ONLY

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why was Paul worried about the believers in Thessalonica?
- What did Paul say will happen when Jesus returns?
- What message of hope can you share with your friends and neighbors?

PAUL GAVE HOPE

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-5:11

MAIN POINT: PAUL ENCOURAGED THE THESSALONIANS BY REMINDING THEM THAT JESUS WILL RETURN.

Paul traveled to the city of Thessalonica. Paul told the people the good news about Jesus, and many people believed in Jesus. Paul started the church in Thessalonica, but some people did not like Paul or his teachings and they forced him out of the city.

Paul worried about the people in Thessalonica. So Paul sent his friend Timothy to see how they were doing. Timothy brought back good news. Even though the Thessalonians faced suffering for their faith, they did not give up. Paul wrote a letter to encourage the believers. He told them that Jesus will return someday. On that day, Paul said, believers will be freed from their sufferings! This message gave them great hope.

Paul wrote to the believers at the church in Thessalonica to help them know what is true and to teach them what happened to friends who had died.

No one knows when Jesus will come again. So be ready. Whether we are alive or dead when Jesus returns, He will bring us all home with Him forever. So continue to encourage each other because we have this future hope.

Jesus Connection: The prophets in the Old Testament told about the Day of the Lord, a day when God would come to judge the world and save His people. Paul said that in the future, on the Day of the Lord, Jesus will return for His people and judge the wicked. Believers live with hope, knowing that Jesus will come again.

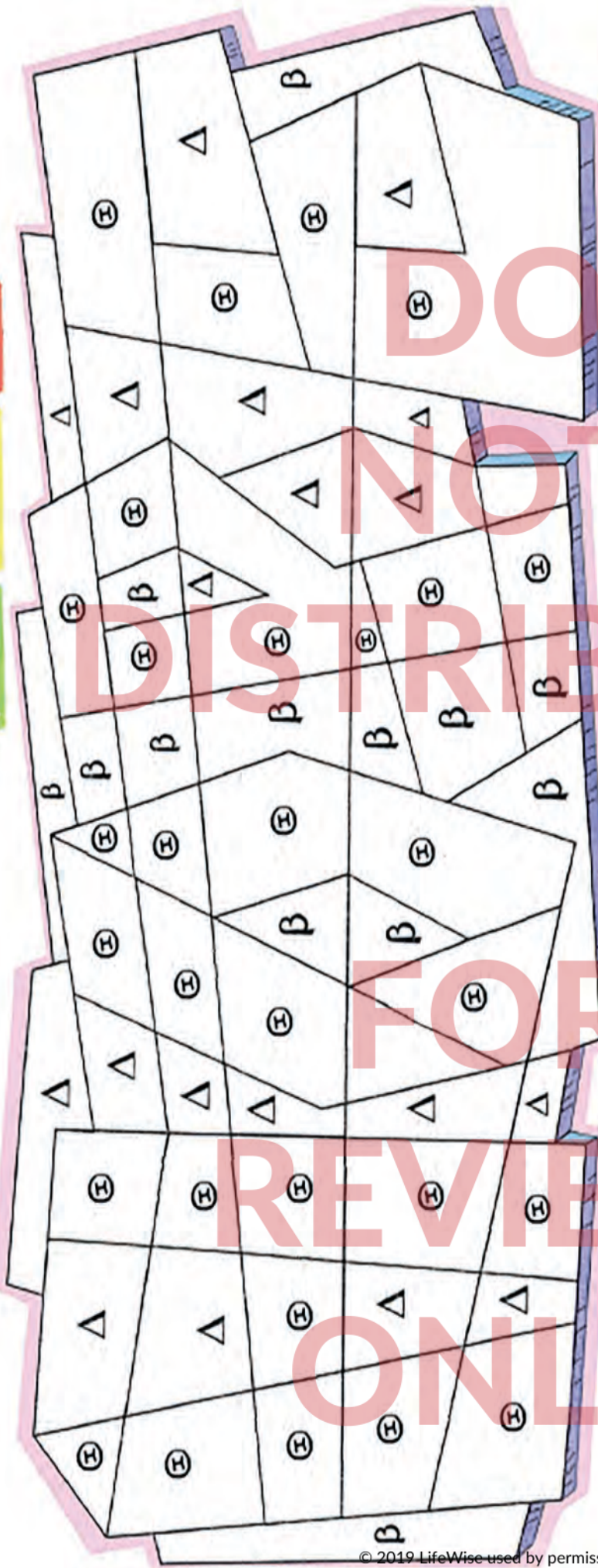
Key Passage: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

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WHAT PAUL GAVE

Use the key to color the spaces and discover the hidden word.



J I G O D L I N E S S O Y D Z A
C L I N G R O W S E C V T W V
Y O L U K J E S U S G O S P E L
W A I T I N G R E T U R N G T J
S S V H L S R E M E B R C D
H G E Y R P J G T R U T H Y P S

BIG PICTURE WORD SEARCH

Find in the word search the highlighted words from the big picture question and answer.

How do live while for
 to ? We
 God's in
 and spread the

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HOPEFUL QUESTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer each question by writing a few words or drawing a picture.



KEY PASSAGE:

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – All

Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return? We remember God's truth, grow in godliness and spread the gospel.

BIBLE STORY:

PAUL GAVE HOPE

- The church in Thessalonica wondered about people who died before Jesus returned.
- They expected Jesus to return in their lifetime, but he did not.
- Paul encouraged the Thessalonians by reminding them that Jesus will return.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What does it mean to have hope in something?
- Do you ever hope in things that are not certain?
- How can we know Jesus will return?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Use the "Big Picture Cards for Families" to review times God made promises. Point out promises God has already kept and those we await.

Paul Gave Hope
L 116 | HOPE

I hope to have _____
for dinner.

I hope my friends at school
will call me by this cool
nickname _____.

I hope to be a _____
when I grow up.

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PAUL ENCOURAGED THE THESSALONIANS BY
REMINING THEM THAT JESUS WILL RETURN.

LIFEWISE
ACADEMY
♦ ♦ ♦
POWERED BY THE GOSPEL PROJECT

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LESSON 117: PERSEVERANCE

WHILE WE WAIT

Jude 3–4, 16–25



WHILE WE WAIT

- ◆ Jude 3–4, 16–25
- ◆ Big Picture Q&A: How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return? We remember God's truth, grow in godliness and spread the gospel.
- ◆ Key Passage: 2 Timothy 3:16–17 – All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.



JESUS CONNECTION

Jude warned the early Christians that some people would try to divide them by sinning and by teaching things that weren't true. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life—the One who protects His people from sin. Because of Jesus, we will be able to stand before God with joy.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

PERSEVERANCE – Refusing to give up even when things are hard.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jude, along with James, was a younger half-brother of Jesus. And like James, it wasn't until Jesus rose from the dead that Jude believed Jesus is the Son of God. Sometime between AD 65 and AD 80, Jude wrote a short letter to warn believers about false teachers. False teachers had secretly made their way into the church, and Jude urged his readers not to abandon their beliefs but to “contend for the faith” (Jude 3).

Jude warned the early Christians that some people would try to divide them by sinning and by teaching things that weren't true. Jude wanted them not only to defend the true teachings but also to actively share the gospel. He told his friends to show mercy to those who doubt, to lead others to Jesus and to hate sin.

There are still false teachers today, and some of them still try to sneak into the church itself. God loves us, and He warns us through Scripture to be on guard. We can study His Word to know what is true, and we can rely on the Holy Spirit for wisdom and discernment.

Such a strong warning about false teachers might be reason for panic among believers, but Jude ended his letter reminding them of God's promise. Ultimately, Jesus is the One who protects His people from sin. Throughout history, God has been working out His plan to bring a people to Himself. God will keep us, and He calls us not only to remember His truth but to encourage other believers to defend the faith.

Because of Jesus, we will be able to stand before God with great joy. In the words of Jude, “To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power and authority before all time, now and forever. Amen” (Jude 25).

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

We have been learning about New Testament letters written to churches in the first century. First we learned that Paul wrote a letter to Philemon. How did Paul want Philemon to treat his runaway slave Onesimus? (*Forgive him and treat him as a Christian brother.*) We also learned about Paul's letter to the Thessalonians. What did Paul tell them they could have hope during? (*Persecution and the death of loved ones.*) Why did Paul say the Thessalonians could have this hope? (*Jesus rose from the dead, and He will raise all believers back to life when He returns.*)

Today's story is from the Book of Jude. Jude was Jesus' half-brother, the son of Mary and Joseph. It was hard for Jude to believe that Jesus was really the Messiah, but after Jesus died and was raised to life, Jude realized that He is the Savior of the world. From then on, Jude believed in Jesus and wanted to tell others how they could receive salvation. He wrote a letter to believers everywhere encouraging them to stand strong in their faith until Jesus returns. Our story today is called "While We Wait."

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Matching Game (Older Students)

- ◆ Before class, write key words from today's session on index cards. [*Suggested words: friends, Jesus, true, truth, sin, faith, Holy Spirit.*] Create two identical sets of cards to play a matching game. For a large class, prepare extra sets of cards and play in smaller groups. Mix up the cards and place them face down on the floor or table. The first player will turn over two cards. If they match, the player keeps them. If not, the student will turn them back over and the next player takes a turn. Continue until students find all the matches.
- ◆ To win this game, you need a good memory. We try hard to remember the things that are important to us. Today, we are going to talk about the importance of remembering God's truth found in the Bible.

What Protects You? (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Distribute a small tub or portion of play dough to each student. Encourage them to think of things that protect them and to create sculptures representing one or more of those things. Allow volunteers to share their creations with the rest of the group.
- ◆ You were very creative with your sculptures. All these things represent some form of safety or protection for us. Did you know the Bible also gives us safety? Knowing God's truth in His Word helps protect us. We will learn more about that today.

A Class Divided (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Have the class stand in the middle of the room. You will read a statement. If the statement is true for them, students will move to the right. If it is not, they will move to the left. [*Example statements: My favorite color is green, I love dogs, I have a brother, I play soccer, etc.*]
- ◆ We are all different from one another. God made us different, and our diversity is one of our strengths as a body of believers. Despite our differences, the truth we find in God's Word unites us. Today, we will hear about a group of believers who had false teachers telling them things that could have divided them. We will find out how Jude urged them to respond.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Finish It Off (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Review the key passage by saying the verses aloud together. Then, start students off and have them say the last few words on their own. Keep repeating the passage from the beginning and have the students finish a longer portion of the passage until they can say the entire verse on their own.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return?

A: We remember God's truth, grow in godliness and spread the gospel.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

While We Wait | Jude 3-4, 16-25

Jude was one of Jesus' younger half-brothers. After Jesus rose from the dead, Jude believed that Jesus is the Son of God. **Jude wanted other believers to share this good news about Jesus and to stand up for what is true about Him. Jude wrote a letter to his friends.**

"Dear friends, I was looking forward to writing to you about the salvation we have in Jesus, but I believe there is something more important to say. **I urge you to stand up boldly for what is true—for the faith that God has given to His people."**

Jude warned them that false teachers had slipped in among true believers. He explained that these false teachers said they were believers but made ungodly choices. They used God's grace as an excuse to sin. They denied Jesus, our only Master and Lord.

Jude reminded them that these false teachers would make fun of believers and the truth. These people would live however they wanted, sinning against God. Jude said these people do not have the Holy Spirit and are unbelievers.

Jude said that these false teachers would be recognized by the sinful qualities that came out of them. They are grumblers and fault finders, selfish, prideful and bring division to the church.

Jude explained that believers should build themselves up in the faith to stand for what is right. They let the Holy Spirit guide them as they pray. "Remember God's truth," Jude wrote. "He loves you. Jesus will come and give you eternal life."

Jude told the believers to show mercy to those who doubt, to lead others to Jesus, and to hate sin. "Now praise God!" Jude wrote. "He is able to keep you from sinning and make you stand before God without fault and with great joy. God is our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power and authority belong to Him. Amen."

JESUS CONNECTION



Jude warned the early Christians that some people would try to divide them by sinning and by teaching things that weren't true. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life—the One who protects His people from sin. Because of Jesus, we will be able to stand before God with joy.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

PERSEVERANCE – Refusing to give up even when things are hard.

Living LifeWise

Because Jesus is perfectly faithful, we can live every day with perseverance.

Character Connection

Write the word *STOP* in big letters on the board or a large paper. Challenge the students to think of as many different words or phrases that are synonyms for *stop* as they can in 1 minute. Use a timer or hourglass to count down and yell “STOP” as it finishes.

Sometimes, we have to stop. Like just now with our timer. Or at a traffic light. Or when our teacher or parent calls for us. But sometimes, we stop because we just give up. When do we tend to give up? What makes us feel like we can't finish? *[Answers will vary: getting yelled at, messing up, getting frustrated at a video game, comparing themselves to someone else, etc.]*

It's one thing to stop playing a video game or give up on a book part way through. But in life, it's important to keep trying, even on bad days or when we face hard things. We need to persevere—refuse to give up—whether it's a math lesson we're struggling with or a situation with a friend. But it's especially important to persevere when it gets hard to live God's way.

God wants us to persevere every day until Jesus comes back to make everything right. And the key to perseverance is focus. When we focus on our situation, it looks huge, and we'll want to quit. But when, as Jude wrote, we keep our eyes on Jesus, we see that He is able to handle everything we face. Nothing is outside of His control, and one day, He's coming back to make everything right. By focusing on Jesus, by reading the Bible and asking the Holy Spirit to help us, we will be able to persevere.

What might it look like to persevere in these situations?

- ◆ A classmate makes fun of you for going to church.
- ◆ Your sibling lost a library book and blamed it on you, so you got punished.
- ◆ You have to do more chores than your little sister just because you're older.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ What book of the Bible did our story come from?

Jude

- ◆ **Where is the book of Jude located in the Bible?**
The second to last book, before Revelation
- ◆ **How was Jude related to Jesus?**
Jesus' younger half-brother
- ◆ **Why did Jude write this letter?**
To encourage Christians to stand strong in the faith, Jude 3
- ◆ **What problem were the believers facing?**
False teachers, Jude 4, 18-19
- ◆ **What are believers supposed to do when people say false things about God?**
Stand up for God by sharing the truth, Jude 21
- ◆ **What is the difference between a false teacher and believer?**
False teachers will make excuses for sin, deny Jesus and bring division to the church, Jude 4, 18-19
- ◆ **How should believers treat those who doubt?**
Show mercy, Jude 22
- ◆ **What should believers hate?**
Sin, Jude 23
- ◆ **Where can we read about God's truth?**
The Bible, God's Word
- ◆ **Who will guide us to know what is true and false?**
The Holy Spirit, Jude 20
- ◆ **How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return?**
We remember God's truth, grow in godliness and spread the gospel.

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Question and Answer Match (Older Students)

- ◆ Before class, create a set of question and answer cards using the Bible review questions. Mix up the cards and put the questions in one column and the answers in another column on the board or a focal wall. Read a question and have a student pick the correct answer. For a more fast-paced game, make two sets of the Q&A cards and form two teams. Place the answers across the room from students, and have a player from each team race to get the correct answer and come back. Teams will receive one point for the correct answer, and the student who returns first will receive an extra point.

Bible Bookmarks (Older Students)

- ◆ Before the session, cut heavyweight paper into strips. Prepare at least one per student. Distribute the strips and decorating items for the class to use to create their bookmarks. Suggest they write the big picture question and answer on their bookmark. Consider encouraging students to list a simple daily reading plan on the back of their bookmarks. [Example: one chapter of Proverbs, one Psalm and one chapter from a Gospel.]

- ◆ We heard in our Bible story today that Jude encouraged Christians to stand strong in the faith. To stand strong in the faith, we have to know what is true. Spending time in the Bible helps us know what is true. It helps us to remember what is important to God and, therefore, what should be important to us. God's Word gives us directions for our lives. We've created bookmarks to keep in our Bibles as an encouragement to read God's Word every day.

Path of Truth (Older Students)

- ◆ Tape sheets of colored paper on the floor in a 3-by-4 or 4-by-4 grid. Before the session, draw a predetermined path across the grid on a separate sheet of paper for your reference. Do not show it to the class! Explain that there is a secret path to get across the papers. Using trial and error, students must discover the right path by stepping on the papers in the correct order. One at a time, challenge the class to walk on the paper in the correct path. As soon as a player makes a wrong step, stop them and let the next player try. Students will soon figure out that if they watch the players before them, they will learn some of the correct steps and make it farther through the path. Continue until the class can walk the entire pathway correctly.
- ◆ This game was very challenging at first because you didn't know the correct path. But as you watched and worked together, you learned and remembered the correct steps. The same can be true for our lives. We don't know the path laid out in front of us. But when we read the Bible and remember God's Word, we learn what path He has for us. He will guide us in all truth. Jude encouraged Christians to stand strong in the faith. We can stand strong in our faith when we know what God's Word says.

True or False (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Explain that Jude comes right before Revelation, the last book of the Bible. Today's Bible story has been about truth, so we're going to do a true/false review. As I read each statement, stand up if you think it is true and stay seated if you think it is false. Briefly discuss each statement with the students: Why is it true or false?
 - ◇ Jude loved Jesus, but was not related to Him. (*False; he was Jesus' half-brother, Jude 1; Gal. 1:19*)
 - ◇ Jude said God will punish people who deny Jesus. (*True, Jude 4*)
 - ◇ Jude told his friends that people would make fun of believers and the truth. (*True, Jude 18*)
 - ◇ Jude encouraged believers to ignore those who doubt the truth. (*False; to show mercy to those who doubt, Jude 22*)
 - ◇ Jude urged believers to hate unbelievers because of their sinfulness. (*False; believers are only to hate sin, not the sinner, Jude 23*)
 - ◇ God is able to keep you from sinning. (*True, Jude 24*)

Strong Person Drawings (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Form smaller groups and give each group a large sheet of paper. One student in each group will lay down on the paper as his team traces him with a pencil. Groups will then think of what makes someone strong. Encourage the class to fill in the outline to create a strong person. They can use drawings or write words. Allow each group to share its strong person drawing. For younger students, trace only one student on a large sheet of paper and hang it on a focal wall. Ask students the question and write answers on the paper for them.

- ♦ Can you name someone you think is really strong? What makes that person strong? In our story we learned that Jude encouraged Christians to stand strong in the faith. What do you think it means to stand strong in your faith?

Shield of Faith (Younger Students)

- ♦ Distribute poster board or heavyweight paper with a shield pattern for each student and instruct them to cut it out. Instruct students to write *FAITH* in large letters across their shields and allow them to decorate their shields with crayons, markers, and stickers.
- ♦ Jude encouraged Christians to stand strong in the faith. Sometimes we will have to face people who want us to sin or stop following God. What can we use to protect our hearts and minds? A physical shield won't do the trick, but trusting in God always will! When we ask God for help, He will strengthen us and give us courage. He will also give us wisdom to know His truth. You may remember that Paul taught believers about the armor of God. One part of the armor was the shield of faith. The Bible teaches that faith can protect us from attacks of the enemy.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ♦ A Message from Jude (Older Students)
 - ◇ Answers: *Stand strong in the faith.* Secret Word: *remember.*
- ♦ Is That True? (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord, Your Word is trustworthy and true. Give us a desire to read the Bible every day. Help us remember Your truth and stand firm in our faith. Thank You for giving us strength to fight against wrong teaching and for helping us to know and believe the right things about Jesus and the gospel. Thank You for always being with us. Amen.

FOR
REVIEW
ONLY

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FOR REVIEW ONLY

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What things might make it hard for believers to stand strong in the faith?
- Who guides us and helps us remember God's truth?
- What could you do as a family to remember God's truth together?



WHILE WE WAIT

JUDE 3-4, 16-25

MAIN POINT: JUDE ENCOURAGED CHRISTIANS
TO STAND STRONG IN THE FAITH.

Jude wanted other believers to share this good news about Jesus and to stand up for what is true about Him. Jude wrote a letter to his friends.

"Dear friends, I urge you to stand up boldly for what is true—for the faith that God has given to His people."

Jude explained that some people among them made ungodly choices. Jude reminded them that people would make fun of believers and the truth. These people would live however they wanted, sinning against God. These people do not have the Holy Spirit. They are unbelievers who bring division to the church.

But believers build themselves up in the faith to stand for what is right. They let the Holy Spirit guide them as they pray. "Remember God's truth," Jude wrote. "He loves you. Jesus will come and give you eternal life."

Jude told the believers to show mercy to those who doubt, to lead others to Jesus and to hate sin.

Jesus Connection: Jude warned the early Christians that some people would try to divide them by sinning and by teaching things that weren't true. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life—the One who protects His people from sin. Because of Jesus, we will be able to stand before God with joy.

Key Passage: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

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POSTER

A MESSAGE FROM JUDE

Use the letters to complete part of Jude's message to believers. Letters may be used more than once.

1 AN 2 R NG
3 1 3 4
5 N H 7
6 A 5 3
H

TRUE OR FALSE?

Circle the letter to indicate whether each statement is true or false and discover the secret word. Look up the Scripture reference to check your work and correct what is false.

TRUE FALSE

R A

SHEM, HAM AND JAPHETH WERE NOAH'S SONS.
[GENESIS 5:32]

O E

JOSEPH WAS SOLD AS A SLAVE AND TAKEN TO ETHIOPIA.
[GENESIS 37:28]

T M

MOSES HIT A TREE TO BRING WATER FOR THE ISRAELITES
IN THE DESERT. [EXODUS 17:6]

E S

GOD ALLOWED THE SUN TO STAND STILL DURING ONE OF
JOSHUA'S BATTLES. [JOSHUA 10:12-13]

H M

GIDEON ASKED GOD TO SEND SNOW TO PROVE GOD'S
PROMISE. [JUDGES 6:36-37]

B E

WHEN IT CAME TIME TO CROWN SAUL AS KING, SAUL WAS
HIDING. [1 SAMUEL 10:21-22]

E A

JOSIAH WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD WHEN HE BECAME KING.
[2 KINGS 22:1]

N R

NEHEMIAH COMPLETED THE WALL OF JERUSALEM IN 52
WEEKS. [NEHEMIAH 6:15]

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IS THAT TRUE?

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the items that are wrong in each picture. Correct the picture or tell a friend what's wrong with it.



KEY PASSAGE:

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return? We remember God's truth, grow in godliness and spread the gospel.

BIBLE STORY:

WHILE WE WAIT

- False teachers taught things that were not true about Jesus.
- Jude was one of Jesus' half-brothers, and he knew Jesus well.
- Jude encouraged Christians to stand strong in the faith.
- Jude wanted Christians to believe the truth about Jesus.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- How can you tell if something is true or false?
- What is our source to learn what is true about God?
- How should we react when we hear lies about God?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Teach your kids what a concordance is and how to use it to look up what the Bible teaches about different topics.

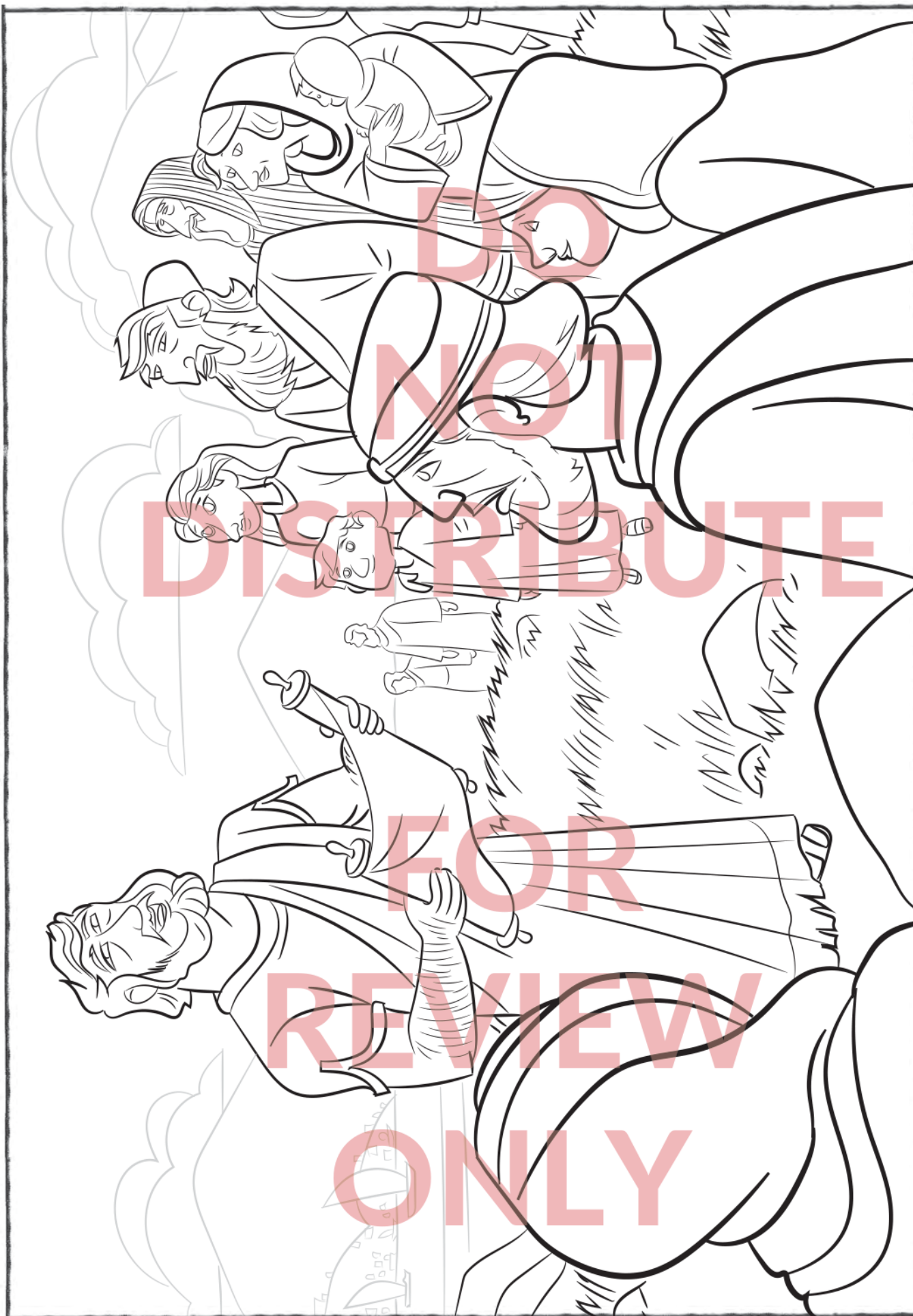
While We Wait

L 117 | PERSEVERANCE



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LESSON 118: ATTENTIVENESS

JOHN'S VISION OF JESUS

Revelation 1:9–20



JOHN'S VISION OF JESUS

- ◆ Revelation 1:9–20
- ◆ Big Picture Q&A: What will happen when Jesus returns? Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.
- ◆ Key Passage: Revelation 21:5a – Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new.”



JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus showed Himself to John and explained that He is the First and the Last, the Living One. While Jesus was on Earth, He defeated sin and death by dying on the cross and coming back to life. Now, Jesus is lifted up in glory and honor forever and ever.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

ATTENTIVENESS – Choosing to listen and pay attention to others.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The Apostle John wrote the book of Revelation from the island of Patmos. Patmos was a small Greek island where the Roman emperor often exiled prisoners. John was likely sent to Patmos as a prisoner, arrested for preaching the gospel.

With this session, introduce your class to the book of Revelation—the last book of the Bible. Other Bible books tell us about things that happened in the past, but Revelation tells about things that will happen in the past and future. A glimpse of the future kingdom of God gives believers hope and encourages them to remain faithful to Christ.

In Revelation 1, Jesus appeared to John in a vision to tell about the end of time. John was on the island of Patmos when he heard a voice telling him to write what he saw. John turned and, in a vision, saw Jesus: He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash wrapped around His chest. His head and hair were as white as snow, and His eyes were like a fiery flame.

Because the book of Revelation is highly symbolic, avoid dwelling on the physical description of Jesus. Jesus' appearance to John reveals what Jesus is like: worthy of all honor, powerful and victorious.

John saw Jesus walking among seven lampstands, symbols for the seven churches. Explain that lampstands are used to bring light into dark places. That is the purpose of the church—to bring the light of the gospel into a dark world.

When John saw Jesus, he fell at Jesus' feet. Jesus reached down and put His hand on John. He said, “Don't be afraid” (Rev. 1:17). Jesus explained that He is the First and the Last, the Living One. While Jesus was on

Earth, He defeated sin and death by dying on the cross and coming back to life. Now, Jesus is lifted up in glory and honor. We can look forward to a future with Him forever.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

All of the stories we have been learning in the Bible fit together to tell an even greater story—the story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus. We started at the very beginning, learning about God’s creation and how sin entered the world. Then, we saw how God was working out His plan through His people. He kept His promise to send a Savior by sending Jesus into the world. Jesus lived a perfect life and died on the cross for our sins. He rose again on the third day and later ascended into Heaven. Afterwards, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with believers. The church began, and the good news about Jesus spread to both Jews and Gentiles. Everyone who trusts in Jesus as Lord and Savior receives forgiveness and eternal life.

We have been learning what we should do while we wait for Jesus’ return. Do you remember the last few books of the Bible we studied? (*Philemon, Thessalonians and Jude.*) How did Paul give the Thessalonians hope? (*Paul confirmed that Jesus promised to return and take believers to be with Him forever.*) What did Jude remind us to focus on while we wait for Jesus’ return? (*To Stand strong in our faith, obey God, let the Holy Spirit guide us and spread the gospel.*) Our Bible story today comes from the last book in the Bible, the book of Revelation. Revelation tells us about events in the past and the future.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Old and New (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Draw a line down the middle of the dry erase board and label each side *Old* or *New*. Show examples (or photos) of various items, some old and some new. As you show the examples, allow the class to place (or tape) them to the correct side of the board.
- ◆ Can you imagine a world where socks don’t wear out? Or where bananas always stay fresh? Things wear out now because our world is marked by sin. Sin leads to death, which means that all things decay. But Jesus has promised to make everything new again—even us! One day, He will wipe away all traces of sin, and everything that God has made will be perfect again.

Bad For Good (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Form groups of 3–4 students. Give each group an index card with a scenario written on it. Scenarios should be things that seem bad or painful but are actually for our good, such as getting a tooth pulled, getting a shot or receiving a consequence for a wrong choice. Challenge the groups to list reasons why their scenario would be a good thing.
- ◆ Sometimes, God uses things that seem bad to do something good. The worst thing that has ever happened—the death of Jesus on the cross—God used for our good. Jesus’ death and resurrection provides our salvation. Jesus has promised to return and make everything new again. We’ll hear more during our Bible story.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Revelation 21:5a

Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new.”

Telephone (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Instruct students to stand or sit in two lines. The two lines will be two separate “telephone lines.” Whisper part of the key passage to the students at the beginning of both lines. They should whisper what they heard to the next person in their telephone line. Students should pass the message until it reaches the end of the line. Have them whisper what they heard to you or say it out loud. Write the correct wording on the board, and keep playing until the entire verse has been shared.
- ❖ Suggested division of the verse for 4th–5th grade: The one seated on the throne said/ “Look, I am making everything new.”/ He also said “Write / because these words are faithful and true.”
- ❖ Suggested division for 2nd–3rd grade: The one seated/ on the throne said/ “Look I am making everything new.”/ He also said “Write / because these words/ are faithful and true.”

Key Passage Pop-Up (Older and Younger Students)

- ♦ Display the key passage poster and read Revelation 21:5 aloud together a few times. Instruct the class to form a line and squat down. Starting at the front of the line, each child will pop up as they say a word in the key passage. Repeat as time allows, mixing up the students or challenging them to pop up and say the verse faster.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: What will happen when Jesus returns?

A: Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

John’s Vision of Jesus | Revelation 1:9–20

Like many believers, **the Apostle John faced suffering and persecution for telling people about Jesus. The Roman emperor punished John by sending him to an island called Patmos (PAT muhs).**

While John was on the island, he had a vision. He saw pictures of many things that helped him understand God’s plan and great power. John heard a loud voice like a trumpet. The voice said, “Write on a scroll what you see. Then, send the message to the seven churches in Ephesus (EF uh suhs), Smyrna (SMUHR nuh), Pergamum (PUHR guh muhm), Thyatira (THIGH uh TIGH ruh), Sardis (SAHR diss), Philadelphia (FIL uh DEL fih uh) and Laodicea (lay AHD ih SEE uh).”

John turned around to see whose voice he heard. He saw seven golden lampstands, and he saw Jesus—the Son of Man. Jesus was wearing a long robe with a gold sash wrapped around His chest. His hair was white as snow and His eyes like a fiery flame. His feet were like glowing bronze, and His face was shining like the sun. Jesus’ voice was like the sound of many waters, and a sharp double-edged sword came from His mouth.

When John saw Jesus, he fell at Jesus’ feet. Jesus put His hand on John and commanded him, “Do not be afraid! I am the First and the Last, and the Living One. I was dead, but look—I am alive forever and ever.”

Jesus explained that the seven lampstands were the seven churches. He **told John to write about everything he had seen.**



JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus showed Himself to John and explained that He is the First and the Last, the Living One. While Jesus was on Earth, He defeated sin and death by dying on the cross and coming back to life. Now, Jesus is lifted up in glory and honor forever and ever.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

ATTENTIVENESS – Choosing to listen and pay attention to others.

Living LifeWise

Jesus is the First and the Last, so He deserves our full attention.

Character Connection

Have you ever seen a ventriloquist perform? Did you like it? Could you tell the performer was really talking? *[Let students respond.]*

A good ventriloquist makes it seem like the puppet is actually talking. They try to trick you (in a fun way) to be attentive to the wrong thing (the puppet). In life, we can do the same thing. We get distracted by what we shouldn't be attentive to (social media, negative friends) so we don't pay attention to what we should be attentive to (parents, teachers, God).

And nothing can switch our attention faster than our circumstances.

When we're having a rough time, we soon focus on the voices or ideas that sound good, whether or not they're true. We start to think, "Poor me. This is so hard. No one else has it as hard as I do. My life is absolutely the worst!" When the hard stuff gets our attention, we can start to miss out on what's really going on.

John was definitely having a rough time. He was alone, in exile, far from home. He was mistreated for telling people about Jesus. But he kept being attentive to Jesus instead of his circumstances. Jesus came and spoke to John. He showed John His glory. He reminded John who He is, and He gave John a job to do because, despite all the hard stuff John was facing, Jesus wasn't done with John yet.

When we focus on our problems, they get very big. But when we stay attentive to God, through prayer and reading His Word, He reminds us who He is and how big He is. His Spirit will show us that, even in hard times, our lives are filled with good things and God's presence. Even when we face hard things, we can trust that God will use everything for His glory, even if we can't see how right now.

Older Student Application

For each example, let's replace the "it seems like" phrase with what is actually true about the situation or about God.

- ♦ I broke my arm one week into the season and won't be able to play until next year. It seems like nothing good ever happens to me.
- ♦ My grandpa is really sick in the hospital. It seems like God doesn't love him or me.
- ♦ I just found out that my teacher next year is the one I really didn't want. It seems like there's no way I'm going to have a good year at school.

Younger Student Application

For each example, let's replace the "it seems like" phrase with what is actually true about the situation or about God.

- ♦ I broke my arm and can't play baseball this year. I love baseball, so it seems like God doesn't care about me.
- ♦ I had a very bad day. I forgot the spelling test, spilled my milk at lunch and lost my favorite pencil. It seems like nothing good ever happens to me.
- ♦ My mom said I had to clean out the cat's litter box, and my brother only had to clean off the couch. It seems like I always get the worst jobs.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ♦ What book of the Bible did our story come from?
Revelation
- ♦ Is Revelation in the Old or New Testament?
New
- ♦ In which division of the New Testament is the Book of Revelation?
Prophecy
- ♦ Who wrote the book of Revelation?
John, Rev. 1:9
- ♦ Why was John exiled from his home?
For sharing the gospel, Rev. 1:9
- ♦ On which island was John exiled?
Patmos, Rev. 1:9
- ♦ How did God speak to John?
In a vision, Rev. 1:10
- ♦ John described the voice as what?
A trumpet, Rev. 1:10
- ♦ In his vision, John saw seven golden _____.
Lampstands, Rev. 1:12

- ◆ What were the seven lampstands a picture of?
Seven churches, Rev. 1:20
- ◆ Whose voice did John hear?
Jesus' voice, Rev. 1:13
- ◆ What did Jesus' voice sound like?
The rushing of many waters, Rev. 1:15
- ◆ What did Jesus look like in the vision?
White hair, blazing eyes, face shining like the sun and feet glowing bronze, Rev. 1:13–16
- ◆ What did John do when he saw and heard Jesus?
Fell at Jesus' feet, Rev. 1:17
- ◆ Jesus told John to not be _____.
Afraid, Rev. 1:17
- ◆ What did Jesus call Himself?
The First and the Last, the Living one, Rev. 1:18–19
- ◆ How many churches did John write to?
Seven, Rev. 1:20
- ◆ What will happen when Jesus returns?
Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Story Order Relay (Older Students)

- ◆ Before the session, make three or four sets of story points by writing the following sentences on separate strips of paper and putting each set in its own paper bag:
 - ◇ John was sent to the island of Patmos.
 - ◇ John saw a vision from God.
 - ◇ John saw seven golden lampstands.
 - ◇ Jesus told John to write a message to the seven churches.
 - ◇ John saw Jesus shining like the sun.
- ◆ Form three or four teams. Put the paper bags on one side of the room and instruct the teams to line up on the other side. Team members will take turns going to the bag and bringing back one sentence strip at a time until they collect all of the strips. They should work together to arrange the strips in the correct order to tell the Bible story. When a team finishes, players should sit down and raise their hands. Wait for all of the teams to finish. Then, call on the fastest team to read the strips in order.

“Jesus is ...” Knockout (Older Students)

- ◆ Form groups of four or five students. Give each group a piece of paper and a pencil. When you say go, the groups will work together to write down as many words to describe Jesus as they can in three minutes. When time is up, pick a group to share their list. The other groups should compare their lists and cross out any words they also wrote down. Let every group share their lists, reading

only words that have not already been shared. Determine which group has the most words (most total words, most unique, etc.) at the end.

- ◆ In our Bible story today, Jesus appeared to John in a vision to tell about the end of time. Jesus' appearance to John shows us what Jesus is like: worthy of all honor, powerful and victorious.

The Bell Game (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Place two bells in the middle of a desk or table. Form two teams. Have the teams stand on opposite sides of the table or run from the edge of the room to ring the bell. Ask a Bible review question. Whoever rings the bell first may answer the question for a point. If the first student answers incorrectly, let the other student answer to try to steal the point. The team with the most points wins.

Who Holds the Keys? (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Bring in a padlock with its key as well as other keys that do not fit. Invite the class to sit in a circle. Select a volunteer to sit in the middle with the lock. Distribute the keys to students in the circle. The student in the middle will get three guesses to find the correct key. For each guess, the player with that key will come and try it in the lock. If none of the three keys opens the lock, mix up the keys and play again with a new volunteer in the center.
- ◆ The Bible says that Jesus is the Living One. He was dead but is alive again. He is the One who holds the keys to death, which means only He can free us from the power of death so that we can live forever with God. Jesus is the only way that we can have freedom from sin and death. We must turn to Him to be saved, and only in Him will we find eternal life.

First and Last (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before class, prepare stacks of plastic cups for your desired number of teams. Stacks should have 11 plastic cups of one color and one cup of another color. With the cups turned upside down, write on each cup one word of the following sentences: "Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega. The First and the Last." Stack the cups so the odd-colored cup is at the bottom. Have teams stand in a line or circle. Each student should take a cup from the top, put it on the bottom, and pass the stack to the next player. The game ends when one team's odd-colored cup reaches the top. Have older classes try to lay the cups out in order and discover the message.
- ◆ Jesus tells us He is the First and the Last, the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega. In Greek, the language of the New Testament, the beginning letter of the alphabet is called alpha and the last letter is called omega. *[Show a picture of the two Greek letters.]* Jesus is the Alpha and Omega. He was alive before anything was created. He helped to create it all, and He will never die.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ Story Words (Older Students)
- ◆ Hidden Vision (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Father God, thank You so much for Your Word. We thank You that You sent Your Son to save us from our sins and that You are sending Him again to make all things new! We look forward to the day He returns. Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

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- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FOR REVIEW ONLY

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why was John on an island?
Why do you think God gave him a vision?
- What did John see in his vision?
- Where is Jesus today?

JOHN'S VISION OF JESUS

REVELATION 1:9-20

MAIN POINT: JESUS APPEARED TO JOHN IN A VISION TO TELL ABOUT THE END OF TIME.

The apostle John faced suffering and persecution for telling people about Jesus. The Roman emperor punished John by sending him to an island called Patmos.

While John was on the island, he had a vision. John heard a loud voice like a trumpet. The voice said, "Write on a scroll what you see. Then send the message to the seven churches."

John turned around to see whose voice he heard. He saw seven gold lampstands, and he saw Jesus. Jesus was wearing a long robe with a gold sash wrapped around His chest.

When John saw Jesus, he fell at Jesus' feet. Jesus put His hand on John and commanded him, "Do not be afraid! I am the First and the Last, and the Living One. I was dead, but look—I am alive forever and ever."

Jesus told John to write about everything he had seen.

Jesus Connection: Jesus showed Himself to John and explained that He is the First and the Last, the Living One. While Jesus was on Earth, He defeated sin and death by dying on the cross and coming back to life. Now Jesus is lifted up in glory and honor forever and ever.

Key Passage: Revelation 21:5a – Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new."

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SEEING STARS

Use the words on the five-pointed stars to fill in the blanks in the main point of “John’s Vision of Jesus.”



5 LETTERS:
SEVEN
FIRST
GLORY
HONOR
JESUS
ALIVE

6 LETTERS:
PATMOS
SARDIS
SMYRNA

7 LETTERS:
EPHESUS
TRUMPET
FOREVER

8 LETTERS:
 THYATIRA
 CHURCHES
 LAODICEA
 PERGAMUM

10 LETTERS:
LAMPSTANDS

12 LETTERS:
PHILADELPHIA

Jesus _____ to _____
_____ in a _____ of _____
to tell about the _____ of _____

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HIDDEN VISION

INSTRUCTIONS: Find the items from the key box and circle them hidden in the picture.



KEY PASSAGE:

Revelation 21:5a – Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new.”

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What will happen when Jesus returns? Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.

BIBLE STORY:

JOHN'S VISION OF JESUS

- John was sent away, likely for preaching about Jesus.
- Jesus appeared to John in a vision to tell him about the end of time.
- John wrote down what he saw for Christians to read.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why do you think Jesus showed John the future?
- How do you feel when you think about Jesus returning?
- Is it important for Christians to know how God's story ends?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

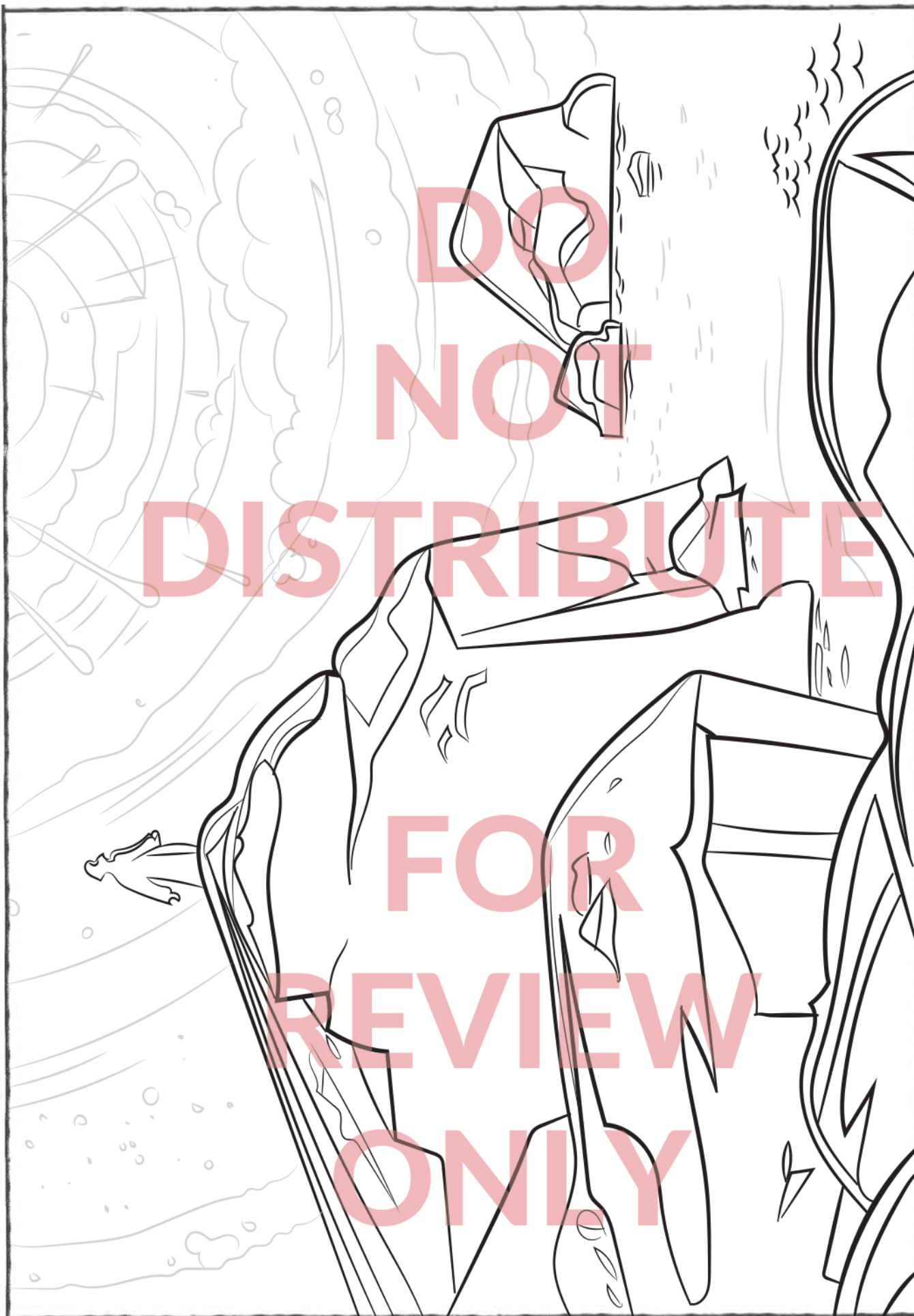
- Have a family storytelling night. Tell the end of the story, then let each member of your family tell a different story that ends the way you describe.
- Make a recipe with your kids, but stop before the last step. Discuss why the “end” is so important.

John's Vision of Jesus

L 118 | ATTENTIVENESS

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JESUS APPEARED TO JOHN IN A VISION
TO TELL ABOUT THE END OF TIME.

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LESSON 119: OBEDIENCE

GOD'S WARNING TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Revelation 2–3

GOD'S WARNING TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES



- ◆ Revelation 2–3
- ◆ Big Picture Q&A: What will happen when Jesus returns? Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.
- ◆ Key Passage: Revelation 21:5a – Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new.”



JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus loves the church. His message to seven local churches called them to turn away from their sin and remain faithful to Him. We can learn from these churches. Through the church, Jesus helps believers work together to follow God's plan.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

OBEDIENCE – Listening to and following through with instructions from those in authority.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The book of Revelation opens with John's description of a vision. In the vision, Jesus gave John messages for seven local churches. Jesus told John to write these messages on a scroll and send them to the churches.

In most cases, Jesus commended the church for their good work, warned them about the areas in which they needed correction and urged them to return to Him. Among other things, He warned the churches not to forget their love of the Lord. He encouraged them not to be afraid of being tested. He urged those who were surrounded by evil to not deny their faith. Each time, Jesus promised to reward those who remain faithful to Him.

The church is made up of people who have trusted in Jesus, who are committed to one another, and who meet together to worship Jesus and share the gospel. Jesus loves the church as His bride (see Eph. 5:25–27; Rev. 19:7–9). Jesus' message called the churches to turn away from their sin and remain faithful to Him. The Lord is slow to anger (Ex. 34:6–7) and patient, wanting everyone to repent (2 Pet. 3:9).

Jesus warned specific churches in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), but the problems they faced can still be found in churches today. Help the students to understand some of the problems the early churches faced: They did not love like they should, they believed false teaching and did wrong things and they were lukewarm—useless to the cause of Christ.

We can pray for our churches to be faithful, effective instruments in spreading the gospel. We should love the church because Jesus loves the church. Through the church, Jesus helps believers work together to do

God's plan. Finally, Jesus warned believers to stay alert because He will come like a thief when no one is expecting Him. Believers—then and now—must always be ready!

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

During our last story, we learned that John had an incredible experience while living in exile on Patmos. Whom did John see in a vision? (*Jesus appeared to John in a vision.*) What did Jesus ask John to do in the vision? (*Write a message to the seven churches.*) Today's story also comes from the book of Revelation, the last book in the Bible. John continues to share about his vision of Jesus. Our story today is about Jesus' messages for seven churches located in Asia, in the modern-day country of Turkey.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Following Instructions (Older Students)

- ◆ Form two teams. One student from each team will be a runner. The rest of the team will line up at the other end of the room. You will whisper a command to the runners, who must take the message to the first person in their team's line. That person will obey the command and move to the back of the line. The runner will then return for the next command. The first team to cycle through each player wins. [*Suggested commands: do a jumping jack, spin around, hop on one foot, and so forth.*]
- ◆ Was it hard or easy to follow all these instructions? Sometimes instructions are more difficult to follow. We'll hear about some instructions that Jesus gave to seven churches during our story today.

Knock-Knock Jokes (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Ask the class if they like knock-knock jokes. Invite volunteers to share knock-knock jokes with the class. Then share some of the following jokes. For each, begin with "Knock, knock." [*Students respond, "Who's there?"*] Then say the first word. [*Students respond, "(word) who?"*] Then, say the phrase. Examples:
 - ◆ Will / Will you let me in?
 - ◆ Figs / Figs the doorbell; it's broken!
 - ◆ Cows-go / No, cows go "moo!"
 - ◆ Olive / Olive right next door.
 - ◆ Who / Is there an owl in here?
- ◆ That was fun. You'll hear in today's Bible story that Jesus said, "I stand at the door and knock." Jesus isn't about to tell a joke, though. Let's find out what He had to say.

Doctor Says (Younger Students)

- ◆ Invite the class to play a game based on Simon Says. Teach students the responses (given in parentheses) to the following commands. Then, give commands at random. Begin some of the commands with, "Doctor says ..." Students who do not respond correctly or who respond when you don't say, "Doctor says ..." are out. Suggested commands:
 - ◆ Drink more water. (*Act out drinking from a cup.*)
 - ◆ Get plenty of sleep. (*Stretch and yawn.*)

- ✧ Eat breakfast. (*Act out eating cereal.*)
- ✧ Exercise regularly. (*Jog in place.*)
- ◆ Why do we listen to doctors' instructions about our health? (*Doctors know what is best for our health.*) Today we are going to hear some instructions that Jesus gave to the church. Jesus loves the church, and He knows what is best for the church.

Real Repentance (Younger Students)

- ◆ Prepare a set of index cards with various emotions (happy, angry, sad, afraid, etc). Call up volunteers one at a time to choose a card and say "I'm sorry" using the emotion on the card. Invite the rest of the class to guess what emotion it is.
- ◆ Have you ever heard someone say he was sorry, but you knew that he didn't really mean it? Have you ever apologized because your mom or dad made you, but you didn't really feel sorry? Sometimes we do that with God. Do you think God knows the difference? Of course He does! Jesus calls us to true repentance which means turning away from sin toward Jesus. That's part of the message Jesus had for seven churches. We'll find out more in just a bit.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Revelation 21:5a

Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new."

Toilet Paper Square-Off (Older Students)

- ◆ Guide the students to stand in a circle. Pass around a roll of bath tissue, instructing students to each tear off a length. Read the key passage poster together. Have students count the number of squares of bath tissue they have in their hands. That number is how many words of the key passage they should say on their turn. Choose a player to begin and go around the circle, inviting them to hold up each square as they say a word of the key passage. Say the key passage as many times as needed for the entire class to participate.

Seek and Order (Younger Students)

- ◆ Before the session, create one set of cards (or more with a large class size) with the words to the key passage written out, one or two words per card. Hide the cards. Challenge the students to find all the cards and assemble them in the correct order of the key passage. Set a timer to see how quickly they can complete the task.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: What will happen when Jesus returns?

A: Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

God's Warning to the Seven Churches | Revelation 2-3

The Apostle **John** was on the island of Patmos (PAT muhs) when he **had a vision of Jesus**. **Jesus told John to write down a message for the seven churches** in Ephesus (EF uh suhs), Smyrna (SMUHR nuh),

Pergamum (PUHR guh muhm), Thyatira (THIGH uh TIGH ruh), Sardis (SAHR diss), Philadelphia (FIL uh DEL fih uh), and Laodicea (lay AHD ih SEE uh). **So that is what John did.**

“To the church in Ephesus: You do not love well like you did when you first believed. Turn back and love like you used to.

“To the church in Smyrna: You are poor and are suffering, but really you are rich! You may face prison or death, but **do not be afraid.**

“To the church in Pergamum: You are faithful to Me, and you tell others about Me even when it is hard. **But not everyone in the church is doing the right thing.** Some people are living like those who do not believe. **Turn away from your sin and turn back to Me!**

“To the church in Thyatira: I know about your love, faithfulness, and service. You do not give up. But there is a wicked woman who teaches things that are not true, and some of you believe her. I will punish her and those who follow her teaching. Many of you do not follow her. **Keep believing the truth until I come.**

“To the church in Sardis: People think you are alive, but you are actually dead. You used to have a strong faith, but now you are weak. Wake up! Be ready for My return. Turn from your sin and remember the gospel.

“To the church in Philadelphia: You are a small church, but you listen to Me and obey My word. I am coming soon. Be ready and keep believing.

“To the church in Laodicea: You are lukewarm—not hot or cold, so you are not good for anything. I will spit you out of My mouth! You think you are rich, but you are actually poor, blind, and naked.” Jesus told them to come to Him, and He would make them rich. He would help them see clearly and would give them white clothes to wear.

Jesus said, **“See! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with Me.”** Jesus will reward every faithful and obedient believer. John wrote, “Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.”

JESUS CONNECTION



Jesus loves the church. His message to seven local churches called them to turn away from their sin and remain faithful to Him. We can learn from those churches. Through the church, Jesus helps believers work together to follow God's plan.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

OBEDIENCE – Listening to and following through with instructions from those in authority.

Living LifeWise

God has a perfect plan, so we can be faithful and obedient to Him.

Character Connection

We need warning signs in our life. We need people to warn us when what we're doing will get us in trouble or when we aren't living God's way. The Bible is full of these warnings, like the ones God gave to the seven churches in our story today.

Some people think the Bible's warnings are there because God doesn't want us to have fun. Other people treat them like a checklist, as if God will be more pleased with them for following all the "rules." But neither is the case. God gave us these warnings because He wants to keep us from making choices or living in ways that will hurt us. He wants us to learn to depend on Him to live His way. And when we obey God's warnings, they keep us from harm.

Why would it be good to obey these warnings?

- ◆ Your principal tells you to walk in the hallway instead of running to avoid going to his office.
- ◆ A relative warns: Going outside without a coat is how you get sick.
- ◆ The Bible says: Do not worry, because God loves you and will take care of you.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ **Who wrote the book of Revelation?**
John, Rev. 1:9
- ◆ **Why was John exiled from his home?**
For sharing the gospel, Rev. 1:9
- ◆ **How did God speak to John?**
In a vision, Rev. 1:10
- ◆ **Whom was John writing to?**
The seven churches in Asia, Rev. 1:4
- ◆ **What did John say Jesus will do for believers who are faithful?**
Reward them, Rev. 2:7, 11, 17
- ◆ **Did the church in Ephesus love Jesus more or less than when they first believed in Him?**
Less, Rev. 2:4
- ◆ **What dangers did the church in Smyrna face?**
Prison or death, Rev. 2:10
- ◆ **What was the message to the church in Ephesus?**
"Turn back and love Me like you did at first," Rev. 2:4

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Love the Church (Older Students)

- ◆ Discuss how the Church helps believers to remain faithful to Jesus and wait for His return. What is the role of pastors and other leaders? What is the role of believers in the church? Why is it important for believers to be a part of the local church?
- ◆ Jesus loves the church. He died on the cross in our place for our punishment of sin. He rose from the dead so we could live with him forever. Because Jesus loved, sacrificed and served the church, we can do the same.

Sculpt the Seven Churches (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Divide the class into seven groups. Assign students to sculpt a scene from their assigned church: Ephesus (2:1–7), Smyrna (2:8–11), Pergamum (12–17), Thyatira (2:18–29), Sardis (3:1–6), Philadelphia (3:7–13) and Laodicea (3:14–22). Have one student pose the rest of their group into a scene that represents that church by moving their head, arms and legs into the correct position. When the students finish, guide them to describe what happened in the scene.
- ◆ Jesus told the seven churches to stand strong in the faith. This is a message for us today too! We can trust and obey God's Word because it comes from God.

Hot Potato (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Direct the class to sit in a circle. Hand out two balls of different colors. Play music while students pass the balls in opposite directions. Stop the music at random intervals and choose a color. Whoever is holding that ball must answer a question. If he doesn't know the answer, he must ask the person with the other ball and share their answer. Restart the music and continue playing.

"Knock, Knock" Circle (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Have the class sit around a table or in a circle on the floor. Demonstrate how to softly knock on the table with your knuckles. Encourage the students to knock softly. Tap your foot to keep a consistent rhythm. Then instruct them to stop. Explain the game: The first player will begin by tapping a simple four-beat rhythm, such as a slow knock-knock-knock-pause. The first player should repeat her rhythm without changing it. Then, the player to her left will add his rhythm. [For example: knock-pause-knock-pause.] He should repeat his rhythm without any changes. Invite students to add their own rhythms one at a time. When everyone is knocking softly, allow the class to listen for a minute or two. Then, when you point to the first player, she will stop knocking. Continue pointing around the circle until only the last player is knocking. Then, silence all the rhythms.
- ◆ Open your Bible to Revelation 3:20 and read the verse aloud. Jesus told the seven churches to stand strong in the faith. He told the church at Laodicea that He stands at the door and knocks. The believers in the church had, in a way, pushed Jesus away. But He was waiting for them to open the door and let Him back in. Jesus said He would come in and eat with them, and they would be friends. We can open our hearts to Jesus. When we trust in Him as Lord and Savior, He forgives our sins and gives us eternal life. This is the gospel—good news for sinners!

Seven Churches Hopscotch (Younger Students)

- ♦ Write the name of each church's city on a separate sheet of paper. Tape the papers on the floor in a hopscotch pattern. The class will line up and take turns tossing a beanbag onto the board and hopping through the grid, skipping the church where the beanbag landed.
- ♦ Jesus loves the church. The church is His means of spreading the gospel to unbelievers all over the world. It is because of God's grace toward us that He invites us into community with other believers. We can encourage one another, just as Jesus does, to stand strong in our faith. Unlike our game, Jesus won't "skip" anyone when He returns. Jesus will judge each person, and those who trust in Him will reign with Him forever. Thankfully, we don't have to wait until Jesus returns to experience full lives with Him. He wants us to love and glorify Him with our actions right away!

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ♦ Seek and Find (Older Students)
- ♦ Hot or Cold? (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for allowing us to hear Your Word today. The Scriptures are living and active, and everything that we read in the Bible comes from You. We believe that what Your Word says is true, and we pray that You would help us obey the message that we've heard today. We thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to rescue us from our sin, and we praise You for defeating sin and death! Give us hope for eternity as we wait for Jesus to return. Amen.

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- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Whose message did John write down for the churches?
- Why is the church important?
- How can we be faithful followers of Jesus?



GOD'S WARNING TO SEVEN CHURCHES

REVELATION 2-3

MAIN POINT: JESUS TOLD THE SEVEN CHURCHES TO STAND STRONG IN THE FAITH.

John had a vision of Jesus. Jesus told John to write down a message for the seven churches. So that is what John did.

"To the church in Ephesus: You do not love well like you did when you first believed. Turn back and love like you used to.

"To the church in Smyrna: You are poor and are suffering, but really you are rich! Do not be afraid.

"To the church in Pergamum: You are faithful to Me, but not everyone in the church is doing the right thing. Turn away from your sin and turn back to Me!

"To the church in Thyatira: I know about your love, faithfulness and service. Keep believing the truth until I come.

"To the church in Sardis: You used to have a strong faith, but now you are weak. Wake up! Be ready for My return. Turn from your sin and remember the gospel.

"To the church in Philadelphia: I am coming soon. Be ready and keep believing.

"To the church in Laodicea: You are lukewarm—not hot or cold, so you are not good for anything. I will spit you out of My mouth!"

Jesus said, "See! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with Me." Jesus will reward every faithful and obedient believer.

Jesus Connection: Jesus loves the church. His message to seven local churches called them to turn away from their sin and remain faithful to Him. We can learn from these churches. Through the church, Jesus helps believers work together to follow God's plan.

Key Passage: Revelation 21:5a — Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new."

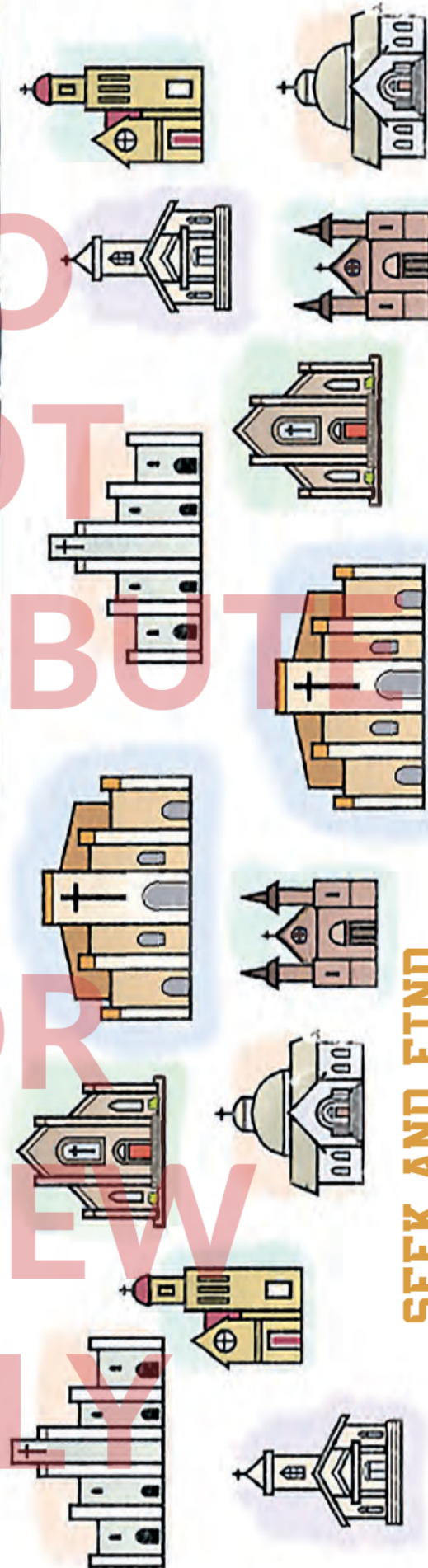
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SEVEN CHURCHES

Find and circle the seven churches John wrote to in Revelation 2-3.

S X L F E U Z R D V A K
 U T C H D B O F H O R O
 S M Y R N A T M E L I X
 E O F E H L U H O F T H
 H I S B P M C O X K A B
 P M Z S A R D I S D Y U
 E A H G L X T S D U H C
 T C R F H S K U B Z T R
 S E L A O D I C E A F T
 P H I L A D E L P H I A



SEEK AND FIND

Find each church building's match. Hint: There are seven pairs.

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 ✦ ✦ ✦

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HOT OR COLD?

INSTRUCTIONS: Draw circles around things that you would use in hot weather and boxes around things used in cold weather.



KEY PASSAGE:

Revelation 21:5a – Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new.”

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What will happen when Jesus returns? Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.

BIBLE STORY:

GOD'S WARNING TO SEVEN CHURCHES

- Jesus had something to say to seven different churches.
- Most churches were doing some things well, but many had problems.
- Jesus told the seven churches to stand strong in the faith.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What were some of the messages Jesus had for the churches?
- How are those messages still useful for us today?
- What does it mean to “stand strong in the faith”?

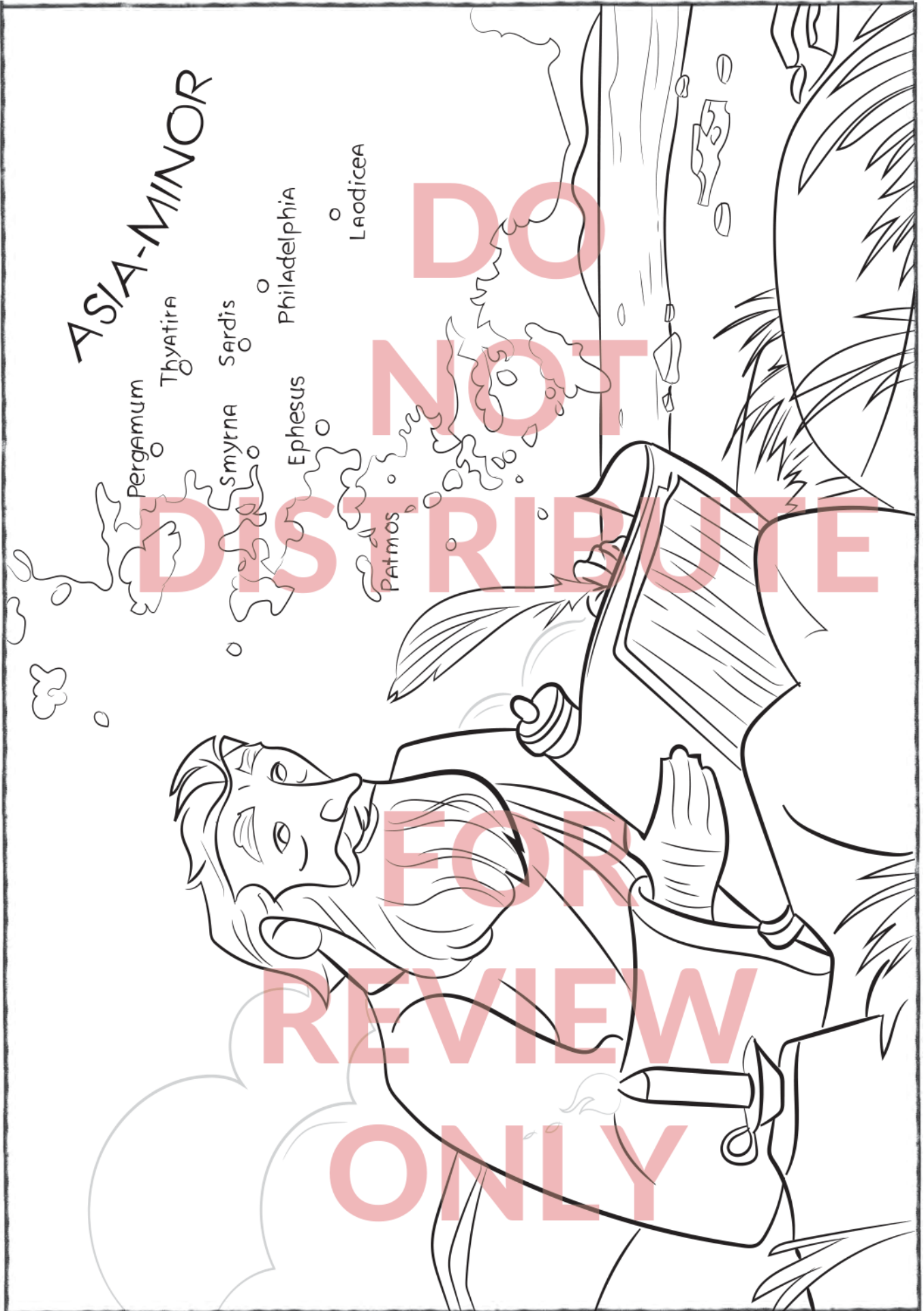
FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Print pictures of different warning symbols from the Internet. Show each one to your family and see if they can guess what the warning is for. Discuss the importance of heeding warnings.

God's Warning to the Seven Churches
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ASIA-MINOR

Pergamum

Thyatira

Smyrna

Sardis

Ephesus

Philadelphia

Laodicea

Patmos

JESUS TOLD THE SEVEN CHURCHES
TO STAND STRONG IN THE FAITH.

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L 119 God's Warning to the Seven Churches | OBEDIENCE

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LESSON 120: HUMILITY

JESUS ON THE THRONE

Revelation 4:2–5:14



JESUS ON THE THRONE

- ◆ Revelation 4:2–5:14
- ◆ Big Picture Q&A: What will happen when Jesus returns? Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.
- ◆ Key Passage: Revelation 21:5a – Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new.”



JESUS CONNECTION

John cried when he saw that no one was worthy to open the scroll. Then, John saw the resurrected Lamb—God’s Son, Jesus. Jesus was killed on the cross so that we could have forgiveness and eternal life. Jesus is worthy. He deserves all praise, honor and blessing.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

HUMILITY – Refusing to think of myself as more important than I am.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

John was on the island of Patmos when he had a vision. Jesus appeared to John and showed him what will happen before the end of time. John wrote about what he saw in the book of Revelation. John saw a vision of the future. John saw a throne in Heaven, and the Lord was on the throne.

John saw a scroll in the Lord’s right hand. A mighty angel asked, “Who is worthy to open the scroll?” But no one in Heaven was worthy. No one on Earth was worthy. No one under the earth was worthy, either.

John began to cry loudly because no one was worthy! Then, John saw Jesus, the resurrected Lamb. The elders threw their crowns at His feet. They worshiped Him and sang a new song. John heard every creature, everywhere, worshiping the Lamb together.

Revelation 4:11 says, “Our Lord and God, You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because You have created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.”

John’s vision gives us a glimpse of our future and also reminds us of a present reality: The Lord is on His throne. After His death and resurrection, Jesus ascended to Heaven and sat down at the right hand of God (Heb. 10:12).

Jesus, the Lamb of God, is worthy of our praise. All the creatures in John’s vision worshiped Jesus. As you teach, hold up Jesus as our treasure who is worthy of all honor. Worship Him together in song. Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross so that we could have forgiveness and eternal life. Jesus deserves all praise, honor, and blessing. We look forward to the day we will join with all the saints in worshiping Jesus forever.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

The Bible contains so many stories, and they all fit together to tell one big story—the story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus. That’s what the Bible is all about. We have been talking about how John had a vision of Jesus. Why did God give John this vision? (*To show what would happen in the very end.*) During our last class, we learned that John saw seven lampstands. What did the lampstands represent? (*Seven churches.*) Jesus had specific messages for the seven churches. What did Jesus want all seven churches to do? (*Stand strong in the faith.*) After this, John saw a glimpse of what Heaven is going to be like. That’s what we are going to learn about today.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Who is on the Throne? (Older Students)

- ◆ Distribute sticky notes and pencils to the class and encourage them to write down a person’s name or title who deserves to sit on a throne. Set up a chair in the middle of the room to be the “throne” and instruct the students to stick their sticky notes to the chair. When everyone is finished, read the answers out loud.
- ◆ How would you act toward someone who was sitting on a throne? Would you feel like you could go up and talk to him? Today, we’ll learn more about John’s vision of Jesus in Heaven. Who do you think will sit on Heaven’s throne? Let’s find out!

Four Square (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Use tape to make a large square split into four quadrants labeled 1, 2, 3 and 4. The students will line up near the court. The first four in line will each stand in a quadrant. The player in quadrant 1 will start play by bouncing the ball diagonally to square 2. Then, players must keep the ball bouncing between quadrants, not letting the ball bounce in their square more than once before being pushed to another square. If the ball bounces twice in a player’s square, that player is out and moves to the end of the line. Each player moves up a spot, and a new player joins in quadrant 4. Players will try to reach square 1 and stay there as long as possible.
- ◆ The number 1 square was like the throne of the four-square court. If you played well, you could stay there for a while. Today, we will hear about a different throne, but the person who sits there will never be bumped out.

What Does Heaven Look Like? (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Distribute pieces of paper. Ask the class to spend a few minutes drawing what they think Heaven looks like. After several minutes, allow a few students to describe their pictures for the rest of the group.
- ◆ The book of Revelation describes a little about Heaven: streets of gold, gates made of precious gems, a place of genuine beauty. We don’t know exactly what Heaven looks like—it’s far greater than we can imagine—but the greatest thing about Heaven is not that it is beautiful. The greatest thing about Heaven is that Jesus is there. That’s what we will hear about today.

Crown Toss (Younger Students)

- ◆ Before the session, cut strips of heavyweight paper or poster board to form a crown. Prepare one per student. Distribute the crowns, markers and stickers or stick-on jewels. Encourage each student to decorate his crown. While the class decorates their crowns, tape a circle in the middle

of the room. When they are finished, instruct them to staple the ends of the crown together and write their name on the inside of the crown. Guide the class to line up a few feet away from the circle. Position a plastic cone in the center of the circle and challenge them to toss their crowns onto the cone.

- ◆ Today's Bible story is about a vision John had about the end of time. People put their crowns at Jesus' feet. We will learn why they gave away their crowns today.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Revelation 21:5a

Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new."

Key Passage Loop (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before class, write each word or phrase of the key passage on a separate craft stick. Place the craft sticks in a cup or jar. Instruct students to sit in a circle. Have the students pass the craft stick jar around the circle while you turn away from them. Turn back suddenly. The student you catch holding the jar will pull out a stick and begin the key passage, starting from that word or phrase. Each student after the first student should say the next word in the verse until the class has gone all the way around the circle or finished the verse.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: What will happen when Jesus returns?

A: Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus on the Throne | Revelation 4:2–5:14

John was on the island of Patmos when he had a vision. Jesus appeared to John and showed him what will happen before the end of time. John wrote about what he saw in the book of Revelation.

John saw a throne in Heaven and someone sitting on it. The One seated looked like fiery red stones. A rainbow like an emerald surrounded the throne. Flashes of lightning and rumbles of thunder came from the throne. Before the throne was a sea of glass, like crystal. John saw 24 thrones around the throne, and 24 elders sat on the thrones. Each elder wore a gold crown.

John saw four living creatures around the throne. "The first creature was like a lion, the second creature was like a calf, the third creature had a face like a man and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. Each creature had six wings. They were covered with eyes all over them. **All day and night they said: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty, who was, who is and who is coming."**

John saw the creatures give glory, honor and thanks to the One on the throne. **The elders fell down and worshiped the One who lives forever. They said to God: "You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because You have created all things."**


Then, John saw a scroll in the Lord's right hand. A mighty angel asked, "Who is worthy to open the scroll?" No one in Heaven was worthy. No one on Earth was worthy. No one under the earth was worthy

either. John began to cry loudly because no one was worthy! **At last, one of the elders said, “Look! The Lion of Judah may open the scroll. He is worthy!”**

Then, John saw someone like a slaughtered lamb **standing near the throne. He took the scroll, and the elders and living creatures fell down before Jesus, the Lamb.** The elders threw their crowns at His feet. They worshiped Him and sang a new song. “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were sacrificed, and you bought people for God by your blood from every tribe and language and people and nation.”

John heard thousands and thousands of angels around the throne. They said in a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was sacrificed to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

John heard every creature everywhere worshiping the Lamb together, declaring, “Blessing and honor and glory and power be to the one seated on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!” The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

 **JESUS CONNECTION**
John cried when he saw that no one was worthy to open the scroll. Then, John saw the resurrected Lamb—God’s Son, Jesus. Jesus was killed on the cross so that we could have forgiveness and eternal life. Jesus is worthy. He deserves all praise, honor and blessing.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

HUMILITY – Refusing to think of myself as more important than I am.

Living LifeWise

When I remember that Jesus is worthy of all praise, I can choose to be humble.

Character Connection

It’s not bad to be praised when we do a good job. It’s good to recognize people when they do something that’s valuable or important. But when we receive praise, it’s also very easy for us to be prideful instead of humble.

We might ask our parents if they noticed that nice thing we did or, when a teammate is getting attention, we might point out how well we played too. We sometimes even put other people down so that we look or feel better than them. When we get there, it’s a big problem.

Jesus is the One who’s truly worthy of our praise and honor for who He is and what He’s done (and promised to do). In John’s vision, Jesus was the only one worthy to take the scroll and sit on the throne. That day hasn’t come yet, but Jesus is already that worthy. When we see Him, it will be obvious that we should humble ourselves and worship Him.

We don’t have to wait until He takes His throne in Heaven to live humbly before Him. We can live that way right now. The Bible reminds us how powerful and holy He is. The Holy Spirit helps us see that we need

Him every day. And both call us to worship Him and give Him all the glory, even when we do receive praise right now.

Do you think these statements are humble? If not, let's change them to be more humble together.

- ◆ My book has a higher reading level than yours. I have the highest reading level in my class.
- ◆ I'm glad my homerun helped my team win.
- ◆ No one but me could have scored high enough to get the biggest prize.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ How many elders were seated around Jesus?
Twenty-four, Rev. 4:4
- ◆ What was all over the living creatures?
Eyes, Rev. 4:8
- ◆ What did the creatures do all day and night?
Praise God, Rev. 4:8
- ◆ What did the elders do when the creatures praised God?
Bow down before the throne, Rev. 4:10
- ◆ What did John see in the Lord's right hand?
A scroll, Rev. 5:1
- ◆ How many seals were on the scroll?
Seven, Rev. 5:1
- ◆ What was John's reaction when he thought no one could break the seals?
He cried, Rev. 5:4
- ◆ Who was the only one worthy to break the seals on the scroll?
Jesus, the Lion from the tribe of Judah, Rev. 5:5
- ◆ What kind of animal did Jesus look like?
A slaughtered lamb, Rev. 5:6
- ◆ How many angels were around God's throne?
Thousands and thousands, Rev. 5:11

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Tribe and Tongue Collage (Older Students)

- ◆ Provide magazines and invite the class to find and cut out pictures of all kinds of people. Then, prompt the students to glue these pictures onto the poster board. As they work, write on a chalkboard or dry erase board these words from Revelation 4:8: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty." Then write out translations in other languages. Encourage the class to copy the translations onto their poster. When students finish, display the posters.
- ◆ Translations:
 - ◇ Spanish: *Santo, santo, santo, es el Señor Dios Todopoderoso*
 - ◇ Bosnian: *Sveti, svet, sveti, Gospodine Bog Svemogući*

- ✧ Dutch: *Heilig, heilig, heilig, Heer God, Almachtige*
 - ✧ Swahili: *Mtakatifu, mtakatifu, mtakatifu, Bwana Mungu Mwenye Nguvu*
 - ✧ French: *Saint, saint, saint, le Seigneur Dieu Tout-Puissant*
- ◆ While we worship Jesus in English here, people all over the world worship Him in their own language. Jesus isn't just worthy of worship from people living in one area of the world; Jesus died for His people all around the world. When Jesus comes back, people from every tribe and every tongue, every country, and every language will worship Him together. All people and all creatures in heaven and on earth will worship Jesus.

Bean Bag Toss (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Create a bull's-eye using poster board or cardboard. Increase each ring's point value the closer it is to the center. Divide the class into two teams, and alternate between the teams to play. Each player will toss a bean bag to determine how many points they will win if they answer the review question correctly. If they answer incorrectly, the other team will have a chance to answer.

Already, Not Yet (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Give each student a sheet of green and a sheet of yellow paper. Explain that you will read a series of statements. They will raise the green sheet if the statement describes something that has already happened and the yellow sheet to describe something that has not yet happened.
 - ✧ Jesus died on the cross for our sin. (*Green*)
 - ✧ Jesus rose from the dead. (*Green*)
 - ✧ Jesus has returned to make all things new. (*Yellow*)
 - ✧ Some people worship Jesus as their King. (*Green*)
 - ✧ All people and all creatures in Heaven and on Earth will worship Jesus. (*Yellow*)
 - ✧ We are free from sin. (*Both; Jesus defeated sin and death by dying on the cross and rising again, but we still live in a world broken by sin.*)
- ◆ In some ways, Christians are living in a strange place of "already, but not yet." What that means is that Jesus has already defeated sin and death by dying on the cross and rising from the dead, but He has not yet returned to destroy all evil. We can be free from the punishment and power of sin in this life by trusting God and letting the Holy Spirit guide our lives, but someday we will even be free from the presence of all sin!

Which is Greater? (Younger Students)

- ◆ Assign one side of the room as "A" and the other side "B." Have the class stand in the middle. Give two options and ask students to decide which is greater, and move to stand on the corresponding side of the room. Suggestions:
 - ✧ A) sharks or B) dinosaurs
 - ✧ A) sports or B) video games
 - ✧ A) ketchup or B) mustard
 - ✧ A) speed or B) strength
 - ✧ A) cats or B) dogs
 - ✧ A) running or B) dancing

- ♦ Did everyone agree on which items were the greatest? We all have different opinions about things like sharks and superpowers, but one thing is always true: Jesus is greater than everything! The Bible tells us that one day all people and all creatures in Heaven and on Earth will worship Jesus. He alone is worthy to sit on the throne, and He alone deserves all praise and honor!

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ♦ Praise Code (Older Students)
- ♦ Connect the Scroll (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for giving us Your Word and for this amazing story that gives us a peek at what Heaven will be like. We look forward to the day when we can worship You freely without sin in the world. We thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to rescue us from our sin and make it possible for us to know You. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How did the creatures in John's vision describe Jesus?
- Why is Jesus called the Lamb?
- How can your family give Jesus praise and honor?



JESUS ON THE THRONE

REVELATION 4:2–5:14

MAIN POINT: ALL PEOPLE AND ALL CREATURES IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH WILL WORSHIP JESUS.

John was on the island of Patmos when he had a vision. John saw a throne in Heaven and someone sitting on it. John saw four living creatures around the throne. All day and night they said:

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty, who was, who is and who is coming.”

The elders fell down and worshiped. They said to God:

“You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because You have created all things.”

Then John saw a scroll in the Lord's right hand. A mighty angel asked, “Who is worthy to open the scroll?”

At last, one of the elders said, “Look! The Lion of Judah may open the scroll. He is worthy!”

Then John saw someone near the throne. He took the scroll, and the elders and living creatures fell down before Jesus, the Lamb. John heard thousands and thousands of angels around the throne. They said in a loud voice:

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

John heard every creature everywhere worshiping the Lamb together.

Jesus Connection: John cried when he saw that no one was worthy to open the scroll. Then John saw the resurrected Lamb—God's Son, Jesus. Jesus was killed on the cross so that we could have forgiveness and eternal life. Jesus is worthy. He deserves all praise, honor and blessing.

Key Passage: Revelation 21:5a – Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new.”

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PRAXIS FOOD CODE

Use the code to uncover some words of praise.

WASH STATE

C	D	G	H	L
Z	A	L	U	V
M	N	O	R	
Y	K	E	Q	
S	T	W	Y	
W	G	R	C	

THE ONE WHO IS WORTHY

Number the events in the order they happened in today's Bible story.
Read Revelation 4:2,8, 5:1-3,5,7-10 to check your work.

Jesus took the scroll, and the elders and living creatures fell down before Him. They worshiped Him and sang a new song.

John saw a throne in Heaven and someone sitting on it.

John saw a scroll in the Lord's right hand. No one was worthy to open the scroll.

John saw the creatures give glory, honor and thanks to the One on the throne.

One of the elders said, "Look! The lion of Judah may open the scroll. He is worthy!"



$$\frac{0}{U E V G} \quad \frac{0}{U E} \quad \frac{0}{U G} \quad \frac{0}{U E V G} \quad \frac{0}{V E Q A} \quad \frac{0}{L E A}$$

$$\frac{A}{S V Y J L U G C} \quad \frac{I}{R U E} \quad \frac{0}{R S W} \quad \frac{A}{R U E} \quad \frac{0}{I J W}$$

$$\frac{I}{R U E} \quad \frac{0}{I J W} \quad \frac{0}{Z E Y J K L}$$

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CONNECT THE SCROLL

INSTRUCTIONS: Draw lines to connect the dots in numerical order to reveal a picture.



KEY PASSAGE:

Revelation 21:5a – Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new.”

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What will happen when Jesus returns? Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.

BIBLE STORY:

JESUS ON THE THRONE

- John saw a beautiful vision of Heaven.
- John wept when no one was worthy to open the scroll.
- Jesus, the Lion of Judah, is worthy to open the scroll.
- All people and all creatures in Heaven and on Earth will worship Jesus.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why was Jesus worthy to open the scroll?
- Why do you think some people do not worship Jesus?
- What would you say to a person who doesn't worship Jesus?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Briefly review with your family the story of God's covenant with David (2 Samuel 7:12,16). Discuss the ways the story of Jesus on the throne shows God's faithfulness to keep His promises.

Jesus on the Throne
L 120 | HUMILITY

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ALL PEOPLE AND ALL CREATURES IN HEAVEN
AND ON EARTH WILL WORSHIP JESUS.

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L 120 Jesus on the Throne | HUMILITY

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**JESUS WILL RETURN**

- ◆ Revelation 21–22
- ◆ Big Picture Q&A: What will happen when Jesus returns? Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.
- ◆ Key Passage: Revelation 21:5a – Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new.”

**JESUS CONNECTION**

Jesus promised to come back to Earth soon. When Jesus returns, those who trust in Jesus will be with Him and enjoy Him forever. God will undo every bad thing caused by sin—no more death, no more pain, no more tears. Jesus is making all things new.

**LIFEWISE QUALITY**

JOY – Having a cheerful response regardless of my circumstances.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

While he was a prisoner on the island of Patmos, the Apostle John had an amazing vision of Heaven. Jesus told John to write down everything he saw. John saw things that will happen when Jesus comes back to Earth.

In the final chapters of the book of Revelation, John described a vision of Heaven itself. He wrote about the beauty of the New City—the New Jerusalem. The streets will be pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the city wall will be adorned with precious stones. The city will not need the sun or the moon because God’s glory lights up the city. There will be no darkness, and nothing evil will ever come into the city. There will be no sadness, crying or pain. Even though there will be no sun or moon, there will be no darkness because the glory of God will be its light. The Lord will reign forever and ever. What an amazing place Heaven will be!

Even with John’s descriptions, we can’t imagine exactly what it will be like when Jesus returns. Use this session to emphasize what we do know, using the unit big picture question and answer: What will happen when Jesus returns? Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.

The promised return of Christ should fill believers with hope, strengthening them to persevere through the trials of this life and remain faithful to the Lord. When Christ returns, those who trust in Him will be with Him and enjoy Him forever. God will undo every bad thing caused by sin—no more death, no more pain, no more tears.

Christ’s return should also give believers a sense of urgency to share the gospel with the world. It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16)! Jesus is coming soon. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

You've been learning each week about one story from the Bible. And you might remember that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell one big story—the story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus. Over the last few weeks, we have heard some stories from the last book in the Bible, the book of Revelation. John had a vision of Jesus. What are some of the things John saw? (*The seven lampstands, Jesus on the throne, Jesus taking the scroll, the 24 elders laying down their crowns, all people and creatures worshipping Jesus.*) John also saw what will happen before the end of time. Our story today is called “Jesus Will Return.” We believe that by faith! Let's check it out.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Personal Timeline (Older Students)

- ◆ Before class, prepare and print a timeline sheet for each student (e.g., 1/2 inch = 1 year). Guide students to create a personal timeline, starting with the day they were born and including various milestones that they have experienced so far. For classes that struggle with writing, consider typing out milestones on another sheet of paper that they can cut and paste on their timeline. Then, suggest they add future events they may anticipate happening: graduating, getting married, starting a family, buying a house and even Jesus' future return. While students are working on their timelines, draw a simple timeline on the board starting with Jesus' birth, death and resurrection and going forward. Place Jesus' return on the timeline with a question mark.
- ◆ Does anyone know when Jesus will return? [Allow students to respond.] The Bible says no one knows when Jesus will return, but we can have faith that He will return as He promised. [Point out the timeline on the board.] Our lives are a small moment in time, but we are connected to God's great story of rescuing the world through Jesus. The biggest event in the future for every single person will be when Jesus returns.

Fix What Is Broken (Older Students)

- ◆ Create groups of three or four. Distribute a broken object (a ripped picture, a ripped book page, a toy that needs to be sewn or glued together, a broken rubber band, a broken puzzle piece, etc.) to each group. Challenge them to fix the broken object as well as they can, trying to make it like new. Once each group has made their repairs, let them show their work.
- ◆ Was it difficult to take something broken and make it like new again? Will that object ever look completely new? In the Bible story today, we will learn about Jesus returning to the earth. When He comes, He will take everything broken by sin and make it completely new.

The End (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Ask the class to sit in a circle with you. Start a story by saying, “Once upon a time there was a ...” and letting the student to your right fill in the blank. Each student will add a sentence to tell the story, and when it gets back to you, end the story. Consider adding an unsatisfying ending, or even just saying “the end,” regardless of the story's state. If your group might struggle with this activity, consider telling most of a story and letting the students try to end it. Discuss what makes a good ending.

- ◆ A bad ending can ruin a good story. We've been learning about God's big story for a long time. Today, we will finally hear about God's perfect ending. It's a perfect ending and a new beginning in one!

Are you ready? (Younger Students)

- ◆ Instruct students to stand up and spread out. Explain that you will give directions on how they should move around the room: hopping, galloping, jogging, tiptoeing, crawling, etc. The class must listen carefully. Anytime they hear you say the words "Are you ready?" they should freeze in a "ready" position standing up straight with their arms to their sides and feet together. As soon as you give another command, they can relax their position and move about the room as instructed.
- ◆ Today's Bible story tells us about Jesus' return to the earth to destroy all evil and make all things new. We must listen carefully to God's Word and place our faith in Jesus' ability to save us from sin. Then, we will be ready to see Jesus face to face when He comes.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Revelation 21:5a

Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new."

Back and Forth (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Divide into two groups. Read the entire key passage together. Have the first group say the first two words of the passage, then the second group say the next two words of the passage. Continue alternating groups after every two words until the passage is finished. Repeat as time allows.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: What will happen when Jesus returns?

A: Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus Will Return | Revelation 21-22

John had a vision of Heaven. He heard a large crowd of people praising God and rejoicing. **John wrote about what he saw.**

John saw a new Heaven and a new Earth. The first Heaven and the first Earth was gone. **He also saw the Holy City, a new Jerusalem, coming down from Heaven. He heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Look! God will live with His people. They will be His people, and He will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will no longer exist. Sadness, crying and pain will no longer exist."**

One of the angels carried John to a great and high mountain. The angel showed John the Holy City. It was shining with God's glory. The foundations of the city wall had every type of precious stone. The city street was made of pure gold, as clear as glass.

John did not see a temple in the city because the Lord and the Lamb were the city's temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it. The glory of God gives light to the city, and there is no darkness. The city is safe and clean—nothing unclean is in the city and no one will do wrong things in the city. Only those whose names are in the Lamb's book of life will enter the city.

The angel showed John the river of living water. It sparkled like crystal and flowed from God's throne, down the middle of the wide city street. The tree of life was on both sides of the river, and it produced 12 kinds of fruit.

God's throne will be in the city. God's servants will see His face, and they will worship Him. The Lord will reign forever and ever.

Jesus said, "Listen, I am coming soon! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

Jesus is the One who says that all of these things will happen. He is coming soon.

"Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!"



JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus promised to come back to Earth soon. When Jesus returns, those who trust in Jesus will be with Him and enjoy Him forever. God will undo every bad thing caused by sin—no more death, no more pain, no more tears. Jesus is making all things new.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

JOY – Having a cheerful response regardless of my circumstances.

Living LifeWise

Because, one day, we will live with Jesus in Heaven, we can have joy in any circumstances right now.

Character Connection

One day, there will be a real perfect place—Heaven! Can you remember some of the things that will be true about Heaven? (*God will be there, no tears, no darkness, etc.*)

John's tiny glimpse of Heaven filled him with joy. Having joy is never about our circumstances or something we have gotten. On Patmos, John was basically in prison. His circumstances hadn't changed, but he had great joy because of the promise that Jesus was coming again and the vision of Heaven he had seen.

We can have joy for the same reasons. Jesus hasn't come yet, but we know He is coming soon. God gave John a vision of Heaven so we would know it's real and will be even better than John was able to describe. Best of all, we can have joy because, on that day, we will be with Jesus forever. The future is certain, and it's definitely a cause for great joy.

Which of these statements shows true joy that's based on our hope in Jesus?

- ◆ I'm having a really bad day, but God says I should have joy, so I'm going to smile and pretend everything's great.
- ◆ That was a really hard test, and I'm not sure how I did on it. I'm so glad God's love for me doesn't depend on my grades.
- ◆ My grandma is in the hospital, but she said she is not afraid because Jesus is with her.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- ◆ What new places did John see?
A new Heaven and a new Earth, Rev. 21:1
- ◆ What came down from Heaven?
The holy city, the new Jerusalem, Rev. 21:2
- ◆ Where did the loud voice say God would live?
With His people; Rev. 21:3
- ◆ What bad things will no longer exist?
Sadness, crying, pain and death, Rev. 21:4
- ◆ What did the new Jerusalem look like?
Streets of clear gold and gates with precious stones, Rev. 21:18-21
- ◆ Who will be able to enter the Holy City?
Only people who have their names written in the book of life, Rev 21:27
- ◆ Where did the River of Life flow from?
God's throne, Rev. 22:1
- ◆ What special tree stretched to both sides of the River of Life?
The Tree of Life, Rev. 22:2
- ◆ When did Jesus say He would return?
"I am coming soon," Rev. 22:12
- ◆ What does it mean that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega?
He is the beginning and the end, Rev. 22:13

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Bible Sequencing Strips (Older Students)

- ◆ Before class, print two copies of the Bible Sequencing Strips and scatter them on one side of the room. Divide the class into at least two teams. One at a time, students will run to collect a strip on their side and bring it back to their team. Once all the strips have been collected, teams will work together to put the strips in order of the events in the Bible story. Briefly review the main events after the teams finish. There are many things about the end times that the Bible does not tell us. However, God does tell us everything we need to know about the future to be prepared for Jesus' return.

All Things New (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Give each student one piece of paper, pencils, crayons or markers. Instruct them to fold their sheet in half from top to bottom. Direct them to draw pictures illustrating bad things caused by sin on the left side of their paper. [Examples: a plant dying, people fighting, a person who is sick.] On the right side, they should turn the bad things into something new, like Jesus will do when He returns. They could draw the plant alive again, people being kind and a person who is healthy.
- ◆ When Jesus returns, those who trust in Jesus will be with Him and enjoy Him forever. God will undo every bad thing caused by sin—no more death, no more pain, no more tears. Jesus is making all things new.

Draw the Vision (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Read portions of Revelation 21–22 (or use the bolded sections of the Bible story script) while the class closes their eyes and listens. Ask them to imagine that they are standing next to John in his vision. Give them a few quiet moments to see the details in their minds. Then, pass out paper and coloring materials and encourage them to draw what they imagined.
- ◆ This passage of the Bible is full of incredible details that are hard to wrap our minds around. The most beautiful truth in today's story is that we will be with Jesus forever. We will see Him face to face, and He will take away all our sadness and pain. Jesus will return, destroy evil and make all things new.

What Belongs? (Older and Younger Students)

- ◆ Before class, gather or print pictures of the following objects: a musical instrument, a band aid, a tissue, sun, moon, stars, skull and crossbones, lion, lamb, tree (of life), river (of life), Jesus, Satan, lantern, flashlight. Scatter the pictures and/or objects on one side of the room. Divide the class into two teams. The first team will be assigned to find the items that DO NOT BELONG in the New Heaven and Earth. The second team will be assigned to find the items that DO BELONG. One at a time, a student from each team will run to collect a picture or object and bring it back to their team. Once all the objects have been collected, teams will work together to make sure all of the items they have collected belong or don't belong. If they discover any item their team should not have, they should quickly take it back to the opposite side of the room and run back to their team. Briefly review what will belong and what won't belong in the new Heaven and Earth Jesus creates.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- ◆ A Bright Future (Older Students)
- ◆ Undo Matching (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for giving us Your Word and Your promise to return and make all things new again. We praise You because only You have the power to defeat sin and death. Thank You for sending Jesus to rescue us from our sin and make a way for us to be with You forever. Amen.

Journal Page

Write about or draw a picture of what a person's heart is like before trusting in Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, God changes our hearts to be open to Him. He gives us power to love and obey Him.

FOR REVIEW ONLY

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Write about or draw a picture of what a person's heart is like before trusting in Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, God changes our hearts to be open to Him. He gives us power to love and obey Him.



JESUS WILL RETURN

REVELATION 21-22

MAIN POINT: JESUS WILL RETURN, DESTROY EVIL AND MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

John had a vision of Heaven. John wrote about what he saw.

John saw a new Heaven and a new Earth. He also saw the Holy City coming down from Heaven. He heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Look! God will live with His people. They will be His people, and He will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will no longer exist. Sadness, crying and pain will no longer exist."

One of the angels carried John to a great and high mountain. The angel showed John the Holy City.

John did not see a temple in the city because the Lord and the Lamb were the city's temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it. The glory of God gives light to the city, and there is no darkness.

The angel showed John the river of living water.

God's throne will be in the city. God's servants will see His face, and they will worship Him. The Lord will reign forever and ever.

Jesus said, "Listen, I am coming soon!"

"Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!"

Jesus Connection: Jesus promised to come back to Earth soon. When Jesus returns, those who trust in Jesus will be with Him and enjoy Him forever. God will undo every bad thing caused by sin—no more death, no more pain, no more tears. Jesus is making all things new.

Key Passage: Revelation 21:5a – Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new."

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A BRIGHT FUTURE

Answer the clues and fill the letters into the grid to answer the question.

- A** a system of underground trains in a city 3 6 7 4 2 1
- B** a small black or green fruit used as food or for making 5 7 3 1 2
- C** an area whose ruler is a king or queen 4 5 6 7 3 2 1
- D** a feeling of great happiness 1 4 2
- E** the organ in your chest that pumps blood 3 4 8 2 1

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN JESUS RETURNS?

D1	B2	A3	A6	A3	A4	C5	B7	B7	B1	C5	B7
C3	E4	A3	E1	E2	B5	D2	E8	B7	B2		
E8	C6	C3		C1	A2	C4	E4	B7	B7		
E1	E3	C5	C6	C7	A3		C6	E4	A4		

COMING HOME

Write a few sentences about what you think the New Heavens and the New Earth will be like?

What does the Bible say about our future home with God?

Revelation 21:3-4

Isaiah 11:9

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UNDO MATCHING

INSTRUCTIONS: Draw lines to connect each picture to the version of that picture where the bad thing has been undone.



KEY PASSAGE:

Revelation 21:5a – Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new.”

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What will happen when Jesus returns? Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.

BIBLE STORY:

JESUS WILL RETURN

- John saw a new Heaven and a new Earth.
- God will live with people, and His glory will light up the world completely.
- Living water will flow from God’s throne.
- Jesus will return, destroy evil and make all things new.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- How does this ending make you feel?
- What does the Bible say about when Jesus will return?
- What are ways the new Earth will be the same? How will it be different?

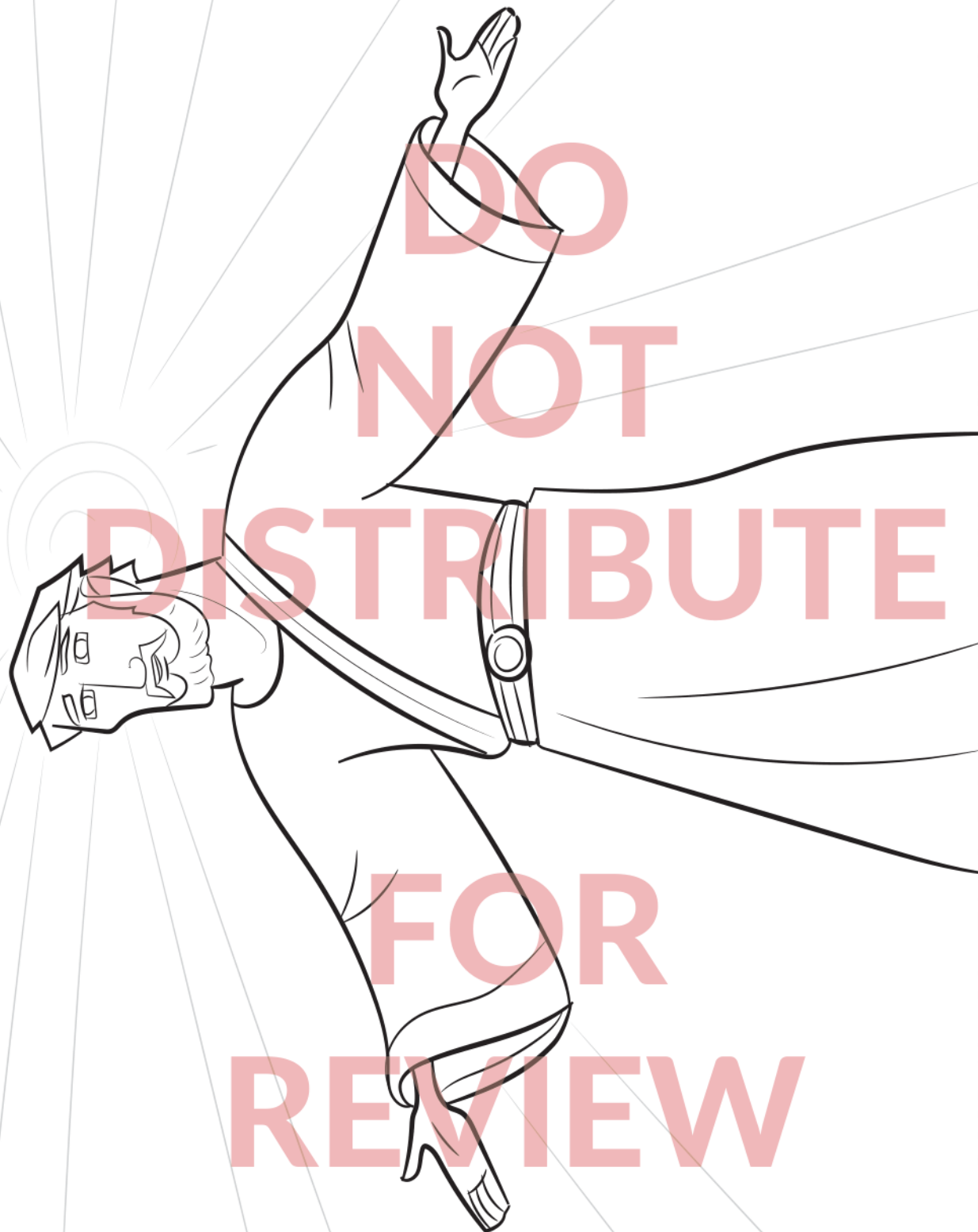
FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Work as a family to build a shoe box diorama of the New Jerusalem based on the descriptions found in Revelation 21.

Jesus Will Return
L 121 | JOY

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God created people in
His own image.

Adam and Eve's sin
separated people
from God.

God rescued His people
from slavery.

God adopted Israel as
His chosen people.



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Jesus was born to be
 God's promised Savior.
 Jesus died on the cross
 to save people from sin.

Jesus rose from the
 dead and ascended
 into Heaven.

The Holy Spirit gave
 Christians power to
 spread the gospel to
 the world.



**DO
NOT
DISTRIBUTE**

**FOR
REVIEW
ONLY**

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE

Jesus returns to
destroy evil and make
everything new.

God's people live with
Him in a perfect place
forever.

