

## The Message: “Christ Alone”

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Acts 15:1-35

**MAIN POINT:** The church encouraged Gentile believers.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Acts 1:8

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus.

**INTRODUCE THE STORY**  
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**EXPERIENCE THE STORY**  
(20–25 MINUTES)  
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## 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 preschoolers 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.



# The BIBLE STORY

## Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Read a letter:** Print a copy of the Bible story, fold it, and slide it into an envelope. Take it out and read it as if reading a letter aloud.
- **Act it out:** Assign volunteers the roles of Paul, Barnabas, Peter, and James. Set up a small lectern or podium. Invite children playing roles to stand at the lectern at the appropriate part in the Bible story.
- **Display a map:** Show a map of Paul's missionary journeys. Point to Jerusalem as you tell the Bible story.

## The Message: “Christ Alone”

*Acts 15:1-35*

**Paul and Barnabas had been teaching people—Jews and non-Jews—about Jesus.** Many people believed, and God's church was growing.

**But some of the people in the church began saying that non-Jews could only be saved if they followed the same rules as the Jews.**

**Paul and Barnabas knew this was wrong. They had a meeting with other church leaders to talk about what was true. Peter stood up and told the leaders about the Gentiles, the non-Jews, who had believed the good news about Jesus. God had given them the Holy Spirit!**

**Peter said that Jews could not obey God's law perfectly, so why should they tell non-Jews to obey perfectly? Jews and non-Jews are saved in the same way: by God's grace.**

Everyone listened as Paul and Barnabas talked about how they had seen God save Jews and Gentiles too. Then James showed how the words of the prophets showed that **God wanted to save both Jews and Gentiles. This was God's plan all along.**

**So the church leaders decided to write a letter to the Gentile believers.** The letter told the believers what they should not do now that they were believers.

**Paul and Barnabas delivered the letter with Judas and Silas, and the believers were encouraged.**

*Christ Connection: The church leaders met to answer a hard question: Can someone be saved by faith alone? Yes! The early church agreed that Jesus is all we need. Anyone who trusts in Him will be saved.*



**WANT TO  
DISCOVER  
GOD'S WORD?  
GET  
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover how God's Word can help them grow in the gospel. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out [www.lifeway.com/devotionals](http://www.lifeway.com/devotionals).

# Introduce THE STORY

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## Welcome time

- “Children of the Kingdom” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church’s security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- “What Will Save Me?” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Guide preschoolers to circle the pictures where a child is making a right choice and to draw an *X* over pictures where a child is making a wrong choice. Ask preschoolers if any of those choices can save them.

**SAY** • We make wrong choices, and we make right choices, but our choices cannot save us from sin. Only Jesus can save us! Jesus always made the right choice for the right reason. Because Jesus is the only One who ever obeyed God perfectly, He is the only One who can save us. That is what church leaders talked about in today’s Bible story.

## Make up rules

Invite preschoolers to make up their own rules. Encourage creativity. Suggest rules to get preschoolers thinking. Rules



may be silly or serious. Examples of rules include “Share our toys. Eat pizza at every meal. Do not talk when the teacher is talking. Jump up and down on the bed every morning.”

**SAY** • Most rules are good. God’s rules are all for our good.

They show us how life works best, but rules cannot save a person from sin. Some people in the first churches began saying that non-Jews could only be saved if they followed the same rules as the Jews. Paul and Barnabas knew this was wrong. In today’s Bible story, they had a meeting with other church leaders to talk about what was true.

## Play out having a meeting

Set out business-style clothes for preschoolers to dress up. Invite preschoolers to gather around a table. Set out a stool or music stand to serve as a lectern. Invite preschoolers to play out having an important meeting.

**SAY** • When people have something important to talk about, they often have a meeting. In today’s Bible story, Paul and Barnabas met with the other church leaders to talk about the most important thing of all—how a person is saved. Listen to hear how they answered the question, Can a person be saved by faith alone?

- business dress-up clothes (suit jackets, sport coats, button-up shirts, scarves, glasses, and so forth)
- stool or music stand
- paper
- non-functioning electronic devices
- toy computers
- notepads
- markers

## Transition to tell the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Ask each preschooler “Can someone be saved by faith alone?” as they move to Bible study. Challenge each child to answer with his or her loudest “Yes!”

- countdown video (optional)

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## Introduce the Bible story

Show preschoolers a wrapped gift.

**SAY** • A gift is not something you work for or earn. Life forever with God is a gift. We cannot earn it. Jesus is all we need to receive this gift. He did everything needed to save us from sin when He died on the cross and rose again. The church leaders talked about this in today’s Bible story.

• wrapped gift

Tip: Place a cross figure or cutout in the box for preschoolers who will be concerned with what is in the gift.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

Place a bookmark at Acts 15 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • The Bible tells us everything we need to know about how to be saved. The Bible is God’s Word. The Bible is true. Today’s Bible story is from the Book of Acts.

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling helps. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

• Bible

• bookmark

• “The Message: Christ Alone” video (optional)

• Bible Story Picture Poster

## Talk about the Bible story

**SAY** • **The church encouraged Gentile believers.** Some people were saying that people had to do more than just believe in Jesus to be saved. They were wrong!

• Main Point Poster

• Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

Everyone—no matter who they are—is saved by believing in Jesus only.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. Who had Paul and Barnabas been teaching about Jesus? Jews, Gentiles, or both? (*both*)
2. What kind of rules did some people think the Gentiles should follow? (*the same rules as the Jews*)
3. What did God give the Gentiles who believed the good news about Jesus? (*the Holy Spirit*)
4. Can anyone obey God's law perfectly? (*no*)
5. How are both Jews and Gentiles saved? (*by God's grace*)

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Our big picture question is, *How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus.* Paul, Barnabas, and Peter shared the good news about Jesus with Jews and Gentiles. The good news is for all people. Anyone who trusts in Him will be saved. God wants us to share this message with everyone, too!

• Big Picture Question Poster

## Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Acts 1:8. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song.

**SAY** • What is *the end of the earth*? [*Allow responses.*] *The end of the earth* means everywhere on earth. Jesus wants all people to hear the good news that He took the punishment for sin and rose again!

• Key Passage Poster  
• "You Will Be My Witnesses" song

## Transition to experience the story



# Experience THE STORY

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## What can save me?

Invite preschoolers to squat down. Explain that you will call out an action and ask if doing that action can save them. Preschoolers should say, “No,” while remaining in a squat. When you say, “Can Jesus save you?” preschoolers should jump up and shout, “Yes! Jesus alone!” Use the following actions or create your own. Intersperse “Can Jesus save you?” throughout as you mention the actions.

- brushing my teeth every day
- praying before I go to bed
- sharing all my toys
- being kind to my little brother or sister
- going to church
- giving food to people who don't have any
- telling other people about Jesus

**SAY** • All these actions are good things that we should do, but they cannot save us from sin. Jesus is all we need!

**The church encouraged Gentile believers.** The church leaders met to answer a hard question: Can someone be saved by faith alone? Yes! Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved.

## Sing “The B-I-B-L-E”

Lead preschoolers in singing “The B-I-B-L-E.” If you are unfamiliar with the tune, look it up online before the session. Consider creating motions for preschoolers to perform as they sing.

“The B-I-B-L-E

Yes, that’s the book for me!

I stand alone on the Word of God,

The B-I-B-L-E!”

Explain to preschoolers that “stand alone on the Word of God” means believing what God says in the Bible is true, not actually standing on a Bible.

**SAY** • When the church leaders met, James showed how the words the prophets wrote in the Old Testament showed that God wanted to save both Jews and Gentiles. This was God’s plan all along! **The church encouraged Gentile believers.** The Bible tells us that anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved.

## “Write” letters to church leaders

Provide paper, crayons or markers, and envelopes.

Encourage the preschoolers to “write” letters to give to your church’s leaders. Preschoolers may simply draw a picture, scribble, or ask an adult leader to transcribe a message.

Write *Thank you for teaching the gospel!* on each letter. Place the letters in envelopes. If possible, deliver the letters to the leaders or leave them in an office where leaders will find them later.

**SAY** • **The church encouraged Gentile believers.** The church leaders wrote a letter telling them what they should not do now that they were believers. The message of the gospel is the most important message



- paper
- crayons or markers
- envelopes

of all! We want to encourage our leaders to keep teaching the truth of the gospel. Jesus is all we need!

## Make a cross collage

- heavyweight paper
- blunt-tipped scissors
- magazines and circulars
- glue stick
- self-adhesive labels
- marker or pen

Cut a sheet of heavyweight paper to make a cross shape. Set out an assortment of magazines for preschoolers to look through for pictures of people. Encourage preschoolers to cut out pictures of people and glue them to their cross shapes. Cut out people images before the session for younger preschoolers. Write or print *All people are saved in the same way: by God's grace* on a label to place on each child's artwork.

**SAY** • The cross reminds us that Jesus did everything needed to save us from sin when He died on the cross and rose again. Can someone be saved by faith alone? Yes! Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved. All people are saved in the same way: by God's grace.

**The church encouraged Gentile believers.**

## Sort items

- sorting items
- muffin pans or bins

Gather a variety of items that are different but similar for preschoolers to sort. Suggested items include various buttons, different colors and sizes of pom-poms, assorted rocks, or foam shapes. Provide bins or muffin pans for preschoolers to sort the items.

**SAY** • Two things can be different but still the same in an important way. In today's Bible story, Jews and non-Jews, or Gentiles, had different rules. But they were all saved in the same way: by God's grace. The church leaders wrote a letter to the Gentiles explaining what it meant to live like Christians. **The church encouraged Gentile believers.**

## Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve pretzel sticks for snack. Encourage preschoolers to use their pretzels to form a cross. Remind preschoolers that the message of the cross is that Jesus died to take the punishment for sin. Jesus rose again to show that He had done all that was needed to save us. The message of the cross is the most important message of all. The church leaders were right to protect it. **The church encouraged Gentile believers.**

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

## Transition

When a child finishes his snack, guide him to throw away any trash. He may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of the cross. Remind preschoolers that there is nothing they can do to save themselves. Jesus is all we need. Anyone who trusts in Him will be saved. Pray for the children.

**SAY** • God, You gave Your very own Son to save people from sin. We do not have to try really hard to make You love us. You love us because You love Your Son. Help us to put all our trust in Him! Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*