

Paul's Third Journey

BIBLE PASSAGE: Acts 18:1-4,24-28; 20:17-38

MAIN POINT: God helped Paul preach with courage even when he was in danger.

KEY PASSAGE: Acts 1:8

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

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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.

Paul's journey began when he traveled to the city of Corinth. 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. The church in Corinth grew.

Paul took Aquila and Priscilla with him to Ephesus. Ephesus was a thriving city in the Roman Empire. Aquila and Priscilla stayed in Ephesus while Paul traveled to others 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 about 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. (See 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.



The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

Paul's Third Journey

Acts 18:1-4,24-28; 20:17-38

- **Display a map:**

Show a map of Paul's missionary journeys. Trace Paul's third journey as you tell the Bible story.

- **Move around:** Tell the story while slowly moving back and forth at the front of the room to simulate the many miles Paul walked during his journey.

Paul traveled from Athens to the city of Corinth. There he met a Jewish man named Aquila (uh KWIL uh) and his wife, Priscilla. They were tentmakers, and so was Paul, so **Paul stayed with them** and worked 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 Aquila and Priscilla from Corinth to Ephesus (EF uh suhs). 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 (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 and taught others, using the Scriptures to show that Jesus is the Messiah.**

Now 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 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. I want to tell people

the good news of God's grace.”

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.**

Christ 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.



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

Invite kids 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.

Introduce the STORY

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

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, ask them about activities they do over and over again. Which activities do they repeat, and why?

SAY • You might repeat an activity a lot if it is something you enjoy doing. People also repeat activities that are part of their job too. Today we will hear about Paul's third missionary journey. Why do you think Paul went on so many journeys?

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the "What's Wrong?" activity page. Direct the kids to find and circle the dangerous items that don't belong in the Bible story art.

SAY • This picture had some silly things added in. They could be pretty dangerous if they were real. Thankfully, giant robots and sea monsters were not real threats to Paul. However, Paul did face many dangerous circumstances in his travels. What dangers do you think he faced?

- "What's Wrong?" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: A round and a round

Teach the kids 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.”

SAY • 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.

OPTION 2: Blanket tents

Use large blankets, chairs, and tables to create a makeshift tent. Allow the kids to help build the tent and take turns sitting in it to play. Consider leaving it up to use as a place for discussion during the Apply the Story section of this session.

- large blankets
- chairs
- tables

SAY • 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.

Transition to teach the story



Teach the STORY

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Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire

[Leader enters wearing a blue denim shirt with a bright red knit hat.]

LEADER • Ah, if it isn't my favorite mates. I'm getting ready to leave on my last voyage. We will be headed out for a while. We don't really know what we might discover, but we are trusting God that it will be a great adventure and that we will be able to see His plans unfold to glorify Him. After that, I'll be retiring my sea legs for a while. I think I may try to do some teaching. I know a lot about the ocean now, so I could probably offer a lot to kids in a science class who want to know more about the briny depths. And, as long as my friends on the boat keep sending me data they collect in the field, I can keep doing my research too. That would be nice, to stay put for a while. You know, it actually reminds me of part of our story!

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Our big picture question is the same as it has been for the last five weeks. Let's say it all together now: *How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.*

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline or big story circle.

LEADER • Time for a quick review! I'll say the name of the story, and you tell me the main point. Are you ready kids? If you are ready, say "Aye, aye!"

- "Paul's Conversion and Baptism" : **Jesus saved Saul from his sins and chose him to spread the gospel.**
- "Paul's First Journey" : **The Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to tell Jews and Gentiles about Jesus.**
- "The Message: 'Christ Alone'" : **The church in Jerusalem encouraged Gentile believers.**
- "Paul's Second Journey" : **Paul and Silas told the jailer, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."**
- "Paul Preached in Europe" : **Paul taught the people in Athens that the one true God sent Jesus to be the Savior.**

• Giant Timeline or
Big Story Circle

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Acts 18:1-4,24-28; 20:17-38. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Paul's Third Journey."

LEADER • When Paul was in Corinth, he met a man and

• Bibles
• "Paul's Third Journey"
video
• Big Picture Question
Poster
• Bible Story Picture
Poster

his wife. Their names were Aquila and Priscilla. They made tents. Paul, in addition to being a missionary, was a tentmaker too. He stayed in Corinth for over a year, preaching on Saturdays in the synagogue, and making tents through the rest of the week. During that time, many people believed. Then Paul went to Ephesus. Aquila and Priscilla went with him.

While in Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla met a man named Apollos. He was a preacher who knew about Jesus, but he was missing some important parts of the gospel. Aquila and Priscilla helped him understand the gospel more clearly, and Apollos became a great encourager of the church.

Eventually, the time came for Paul to leave Ephesus too. Paul knew the Lord wanted him to travel to Jerusalem next, but he did not know what would happen to him there. **God helped Paul preach with courage, even when he was in danger.** Jerusalem would be no different in that way. Paul was willing to go through hardships to keep preaching the gospel because he knew what we've been learning: ***How do people bear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.***

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Christ connection

LEADER • 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. We are called to the same work. We have the same Holy Spirit living in us, and believe in the same gospel for our salvation. So there's

nothing stopping us from being like Paul!

Key passage (5 minutes)

Allow volunteers to say the key passage from memory. Thank them for their effort and encourage others to keep working on memorizing the passage. Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Acts 1:8.

LEADER • Our mission is the same today as it was thousands of years ago when Jesus first gave it to the disciples. We are to go into the world and share the gospel with everyone by the power of the Holy Spirit. That's how more people will hear and be able to repent of their sin and believe. That's how the church grows and we accomplish our mission!

Lead boys and girls in singing "To the End of the Earth."

- Key Passage Poster
- "To the End of the Earth" song

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • Have you ever wondered where God might end up taking you as His plan for your life unfolds? Watch this video and think about your answer to each question it asks.

Show the "Unit 30, Session 6" discussion starter video. Discuss with kids where they would want to go to preach the gospel. Is there anywhere they would not go? Why or why not?

LEADER • Each of us is part of God's mission to reach the whole world with the gospel. We may not all end up going to exotic places, but we can share the gospel anywhere we go. And, if God does call us to strange or dangerous places to share the gospel, we can trust that God will be with us to give us boldness and wisdom to share Jesus with people who need Him.

- "Unit 30, Session 6" discussion starter video

No danger is too great for us when we know that our future is safe with God forever.

Sing (4 minutes)

• “A Mission from Above”
song

LEADER • Remember, our mission isn’t from mankind, it’s from God above! Let’s sing together.
Sing together “A Mission from Above.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • God, You are good and You are good to us.
Thank You for the ways You prepare us for Your mission and for giving us the power to obey You through the Holy Spirit. Give us courage to preach the gospel in all places in every way. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Apply the STORY

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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Take volunteers to say the key passage from memory. If needed, help the kids along using the hand motions your group originally devised in session one.

Suggested motions:

- **You will receive power** [*Flex arms.*]
 - **when the Holy Spirit** [*Point upward.*]
 - **comes on you** [*Move hands down to touch your heart.*]
 - **and you will be my witnesses** [*Hold up four fingers in front of your lips.*]
 - **in Jerusalem** [*Use your hands to make a small circle in front of you with your hands.*]
 - **in all Judea and Samaria** [*Make a larger circle with your arms.*]
 - **and to the ends of the earth** [*Spread arms out wide.*]
- SAY** • Great job with those motions! Our key passage reminds us that Jesus' plan for us is to share the gospel in our cities, nation, and in the whole world. We can trust the Holy Spirit. He is with us and will help us to share the gospel and see the church grow. A great way to share the gospel is to tell people what we have witnessed, or seen, God do in our own lives.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Ask the following set of true or false questions. Instruct kids to stand up if the statement is true, or crouch down low if the statement is false. For false statements, ask a volunteer to explain what about the statement makes it false.

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster

Statements:

1. Aquila and Priscilla were tentmakers, like Paul. (*true, Acts 18:2-3*)
2. Apollos was teaching in Ephesus. (*true, Acts 18:24*)
3. Apollos was completely wrong about Jesus. (*False, Apollos was accurate, but only knew about John's baptism; Acts 18:25*)
4. Priscilla and Aquila mocked Apollos for missing some information about Jesus. (*False, they took him aside to explain the way of God more accurately; Acts 18:26*)
5. Apollos was helpful to believers and used Scripture to show that Jesus is the Messiah. (*true, Acts 18:28*)
6. Paul knew exactly what would happen to him in Jerusalem. (*False, Paul did not know what he would encounter there; Acts 20:22*)
7. Paul obeyed the Holy Spirit even if it meant being arrested or put in danger. (*true, Acts 20:23-24*)
8. Everyone was glad that Paul was finally leaving. (*False, the people were sad to see him go, but they prayed for him; Acts 20:36-38*)

SAY • God helped Paul preach with courage even when he was in danger. Paul trusted God and obeyed the Holy Spirit, putting God's plans above his own comfort and safety. Paul wanted to see the church grow and more people believe in Jesus. Paul wanted the whole world to honor Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

The Holy Spirit gave Paul strength in difficult times, so he could face whatever came next.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Missionary role-play

Describe a few scenarios for the kids. Invite a few kids to act out each scenario to show how they could honor God and share the gospel in each situation.

Suggested scenarios:

- 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.

SAY • 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.

OPTION 2: Cards for missionaries

Work with your church to figure out how to get mail to missionaries that your church supports. Give kids paper, markers, and other craft supplies and help them write encouraging notes to missionaries.

- paper and markers
- other craft supplies

SAY • 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!

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.