



UNIT 35 | SESSION 3

PAUL WAS SENT TO ROME

ACTS 24–26

KEY PASSAGE:

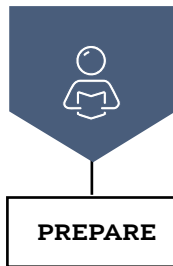
Isaiah 25:1

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why should we praise Jesus? We should praise Jesus for what He has done to provide our salvation and because He will one day make all things right.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

God chose Paul to take the gospel to Gentiles, kings, and the Israelites. 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.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

The story of Paul's time in Caesarea seemed to be long, drawn out, and hopeless. Even still, the apostle was not without hope as God continued to direct his steps, allowing him to proclaim the good news of Jesus before the governor and king—just as Jesus prophesied of His followers in Matthew 10:18.

How does Paul establish the credibility of his faith in Jesus here at his tribunal? What does he declare to be his hope, even now as a prisoner under the threat of death by his own people?

Paul spent much of this time laying out his testimony, beginning with his blamelessness through the lens of the Jewish law, as well as his continued worship of the same God as his Jewish ancestors. As he stood before King Agrippa and Queen Bernice, the military commanders, and prominent men of the city, he laid out the hope of God's people since the beginning and how Jesus' life, death, and resurrection served as the fulfillment of their long-awaited grand hope.

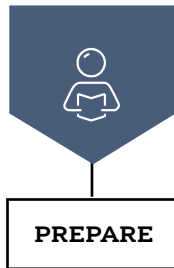
It seemed apparent to the king that, after years of incarceration, this prisoner had finally received an opportunity to defend his freedom before these great men of power. However, rather than deflecting from his intended message for the sake of his freedom, Paul chose to extend a gospel

presentation. The king asked if he was really going to present the case of Christ so easily, and Paul's response was that he desired all those individuals present before him to receive the same gift of salvation that applies to all—no matter their worldly status.

Paul never wavered in his boasting of Christ and His resurrection, nor did he allow the terrible circumstances of his imprisonment to color his belief in the worthiness of his Lord. Consider the faith this man had in believing Jesus' promises amidst his hardship. How can you shine that same light as you teach of Paul's courage and perseverance in his eternal hope in Jesus? Teach the boys and girls in your group about the boldness of Paul in response to the faithfulness of Jesus.

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Festus: the successor of Felix as procurator of Judea (Acts 24:27). He assumed this office at Nero's appointment in A.D. 60. He held it until his death in A.D. 62.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ “Search and Find” activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ index cards, 1 per kid
- ☐ paper bag



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ “Paul Was Sent to Rome” video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ “Unit 35, Session 3” questions from kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ “Asia-Pacific Rim: We Need Jesus” missions video

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ “I Will Exalt You (Isaiah 25:1)” song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ index card sets, 1 per group



LOVE

Review & Bible skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set
- ☐ world map



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ rubber bouncy balls, 1 per group
- ☐ seashells, rocks, or jacks; 6 per group

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ red sticker

Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ “Who Said It?” activity page



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “Have you ever wanted to do something so much that you were willing to do whatever it took to do it? Why?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Search and Find” on the activity page.

SAY “Today, we will see how Paul was obedient to take the gospel to the Gentiles, kings, and the Israelites. Paul was willing to do whatever it took for people to hear the good news.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: YOU BE THE JUDGE

Before the session, write different statements on individual index cards such as the earth is the largest planet, Moses delivered Israel from Egypt, cows produce milk, bananas are pink, and so on. Create a card for each kid. Then place all the cards in a paper bag.

Form kids into two teams. Invite kids one at a time to draw a card from the bag. Tell kids they will be the “judge” and will need to determine if what is on the card is true or false. Tell kids that if they guess correctly, they earn a point for their team. Repeat until all kids from both teams have had an opportunity to be the “judge.” The team with the most points wins.

SAY “People don’t always make very good judges. In fact, our story today teaches us that certain rulers, kings, and Jewish leaders didn’t always judge Paul rightly as he shared about Jesus. Thankfully, we do have a good and righteous Judge. Let’s get ready to hear how Paul taught about the one true Judge and how He saves all who trust in Him.”

☐ OPTION 2: EVERY OPPORTUNITY



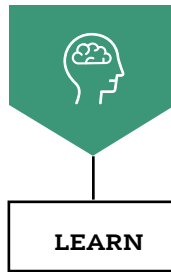
Form kids into groups of three or four and invite them to brainstorm some ways they can make the most of every opportunity to glorify of God. Provide each group with one of the following scenarios: being assigned clean up duty in the school cafeteria, meeting a new kid who moved from a different country, forgetting to turn in their homework, dealing with an aggravating younger sibling, losing their ticket to see their favorite sports team play, getting in trouble for something they didn’t do.

After a few minutes, invite each group to share its ideas. For example, when dealing with an aggravating younger sibling they could use the opportunity to show grace and forgiveness.

SAY “Life comes with frustrating, disappointing, and difficult times. But we don’t have to let our circumstances determine how we respond. The apostle Paul had many unfair challenges, yet he sought to use every opportunity as a means to tell others about Jesus. Let’s get ready to hear how he shared the gospel while he was in jail.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Hello! My name is [your name], and I am so excited to be here with you! Did you bring your Bible with you? If you did, hold it up high. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] We’ll be hearing more about Paul today from the book of Acts.

Throughout the Bible we read about God’s plan to save people from their sins. Paul knew the importance of sharing this good news with the world. He wanted everyone to know what Jesus had done, and he was willing to do whatever it took so that people could hear.”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

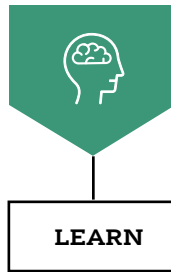
SAY “What is the big picture question we’ve been learning? [Allow responses.] **Why should we praise Jesus?** Do you remember the answer? [Allow responses.] **We should praise Jesus for what He has done to provide our salvation and because He will one day make all things right.**

Today, we will see that Paul continued to share the gospel even while in prison. Paul’s faithfulness to preach the gospel gives praise to Jesus. Paul showed that Jesus is most valuable to him. Even when our own circumstances are challenging, we can still praise Jesus too. He is worthy.”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “A couple of weeks ago, we learned that Paul was arrested in Jerusalem because the Jewish leaders lied about him. But God was with Paul and protected him. Even when the Jewish leaders planned to kill Paul, God helped Paul safely get to Caesarea through the Roman commander’s orders. Paul was in dangerous situations, yet he continued to share the good news. Today, we will learn that while Paul was in prison, he shared the gospel with as many people as he could.”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Acts 24–26. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Paul Was Sent to Rome.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

PAUL WAS SENT TO ROME

“ Paul had narrowly escaped death in Jerusalem. The Jews planned to kill Paul, but the Roman soldiers took him to Caesarea (cess uh REE uh), 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 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 haven’t done anything wrong,” Paul explained again. “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 visited Festus and Paul. Paul told the king how he became a believer. He explained that Jesus died and rose again to bring salvation to Jews and Gentiles. “You are out of your mind!” Festus said.

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.

Christ Connection: God chose Paul to take the gospel to Gentiles, kings, and the Israelites. 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. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Pound it: When Paul speaks to Felix about God as Judge, invite kids to pound their fist on their lap or a table. Remind kids that all who trust in Jesus are freed from God’s judgment of sin.

Act it out: Choose volunteers to play the parts of Paul, Felix, Festus, King Agrippa, and Queen Bernice as you tell the story.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ While Paul was in prison, God gave Paul many opportunities to share the gospel with people in positions of power. And Paul took advantage of those opportunities. Paul didn’t waste his time complaining or moping about. Instead, he trusted God and shared the good news with all who would listen.

How did Felix respond to Paul telling him God would judge the world? Look at Acts 24:24-25.

[Choose a volunteer to read aloud Acts 24:24-25.] Felix became afraid. Like all people, Felix was a sinner and deserved judgment on his sin. He had heard about “the Way” or the good news of Jesus, but had not trusted in Jesus. Paul was bold and used the opportunity to share how Felix could be saved from his sin.

Later, Paul had opportunities to share the gospel with Festus, King Agrippa, and Queen Bernice. While he shared with King Agrippa, who did Paul say helped him? Look at Acts 26:22-23. **[Choose a volunteer to read aloud Acts 26:22-23.]** Paul knew that his help came from the Lord. He was confident in his calling to share the gospel with those who had not heard and continued to share even while under arrest. Paul trusted God to take care of him, and God was faithful to do so.

Paul was innocent of any crime. He was passed from one ruler to the next without finding freedom. Festus even mocked Paul and said he was out of his mind. Yet, Paul never stopped telling people about the life-saving and life-changing truth of the gospel. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ God chose Paul to take the gospel to Gentiles, kings, and the Israelites. 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. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 35, Session 3” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why doesn’t everyone believe in Jesus?
2. Do you believe in Jesus? How are you sharing your faith so others might believe too?



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Play the missions video.

SAY “Do you remember from the video how many people live in the Asia-Pacific Rim? [Allow responses.] Roughly 2.3 billion people live in the Asia-Pacific Rim. The area has over 3,355 people groups living in 16 different countries. Ninety-five of every 100 people living in the area do not know about Jesus.

Missionaries and believers are working hard to tell people about Jesus in the area. Recently in 2022, around 157,00 people in the Asia-Pacific Rim had the opportunity to hear about Jesus and over 14,000 of them believed in Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Through the faithful sharing of the gospel, 1,521 new churches were started.”

Pray that missionaries will follow the example of Paul and be willing to do whatever it takes for more people in the Asia-Pacific Rim to hear about Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Isaiah 25:1 together.

SAY “Our key passage reminds us that God is worthy of our praise. One of the ways we can praise Him is by remembering all that He has done and thanking Him.”

Form kids into groups and give each group a set of index cards. Lead groups to work together to write a word from the key passage on individual cards. Direct groups to mix up the cards and then switch their set with the other group. Challenge kids to place the cards in the correct order of the key passage.

Lead kids to sing “I Will Exalt You (Isaiah 25:1).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

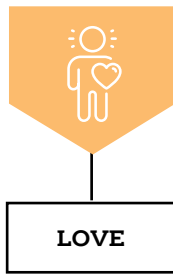
7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “Thank You, Lord, that through Jesus, people can have their sins forgiven and live with You forever. Help us make the most of every opportunity to share this good news with others so that they can be saved. Amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the New Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Acts 26. Explain that while Paul didn't write Acts (Luke did), much of Acts focuses on Paul's life as a missionary. Remind kids that Paul was called by God to preach the gospel to Jews, Gentiles, and even kings. (Acts 9:15)

Consider comparing the New Testament Mediterranean Map to a modern-day map to help kids understand where these stories took place. (Tip: Locate the areas in and around modern-day Caesarea [F9].) Choose a volunteer to read aloud Acts 26:28-29.

SAY “While defending himself before King Agrippa, Paul shared his testimony of how Jesus saved him. He desired that everyone, even King Agrippa, hear the good news of Jesus and experience the forgiveness only Jesus can give. This is a reflection of God's heart for people. When we share the good news, we are showing people the love of Jesus and displaying our love for God.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “Paul shared the gospel with his enemies and even those in authority over him. Would this be difficult for you? Why?”

Remind kids that Paul's boldness and love for others came from the Holy Spirit within him. Tell kids that the grace of God had changed Paul and allowed him to see that anyone, even our enemies, can be saved. Remind kids that Paul was once an enemy of the church, but now risked his life for Jesus.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Tim. 1:7-9.)

SAY “Felix was afraid when he heard God was going to judge the world. Do we need to fear God's judgment if we are in Christ?”

Discuss how there is no condemnation or punishment for those who are in Christ. Remind kids that Jesus took our punishment on Himself when He died on the cross. Tell kids that we are set free from the law of sin and death.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 8:1-2.)

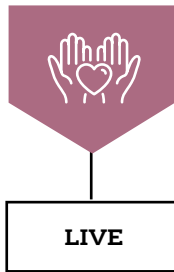
SAY “Paul met with Felix over and over again and shared the gospel. Should we ever give up sharing Jesus with others? Why?”

Prompt kids to think about how we continue to share the good news because it is the only way for people to be saved. Discuss how we cannot make people believe, but we can trust God to work in people's hearts as they hear the truth about Jesus.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Cor. 3:12.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ **OPTION 1: BOLA BEKEL**



Share that kids in Indonesia play a game called Bola Bekel. Explain that this game is similar to jacks and is traditionally played with a bekel ball and six small seashells.

Form kids into groups of three to six kids. Provide each group with a rubber bouncy ball and six seashells. If seashells are unavailable, consider using jacks or rocks. Explain that kids will take turns putting all the seashells and the ball in the palm of one hand. Then kids will throw the ball up and drop the seashells on the floor. Tell kids that while the ball is in the air, they will pick up one seashell and then catch the ball. Explain that the ball can only bounce once while picking up the shell. Continue until a player picks up all of the seashells while successfully catching the ball each time.

SAY “Indonesia is a country in Southeast Asia. It has roughly 240 people groups and about 1.9 million people who have not been reached with the gospel. Let’s pray that God will send missionaries to share about Jesus.”

☐ **OPTION 2: SEEK THE LOST**



Invite kids to take off one of their shoes and toss it in a pile. Tell kids to close their eyes. While the kids’ eyes are closed, choose one shoe and place a red sticker on its sole. Bury the shoe back in the pile. Then lead kids to open their eyes and on your start, direct them to search for the shoe with the red sticker. Award a point to whoever find the shoe. Repeat as time allows, challenging kids to be the first to find the shoe.

Then read Matthew 9:35-38 and Luke 15:4-6. Discuss how Jesus is the Shepherd who has compassion on those who are lost. Point out that in Acts 26:28-29, Paul displayed the heart of Jesus for those who are not saved.

SAY “You all searched for the shoe with the red sticker and were excited when you found it. Jesus came to seek and save those who are lost in their sin. When we follow His example, like Paul did, we display a heart that has been changed by God’s grace.”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the 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 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?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God that Jesus seeks out the lost and uses us to share the good news. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Who Said It?” on the activity page.