



LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

Acts 27:18-44

Psalms 18:15-16

Session Theme:

Deliverance

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: Lifesavers!

Bring a package of gummy Lifesaver candies to class, and hand one out to each child. Tell them you will talk about them before you will eat them. Hold up one of the candies, and ask kids what the shape reminds them of. Explain that when the candy was invented, the maker thought they looked like old fashioned life preservers on a ship. These large, donut-shaped rings float, and people can hang onto them in case their ship sinks. Invite kids to eat their candy Lifesaver if they want.

In today's story, there is a shipwreck — and the need for some actual life savers! What happens? Are there any survivors? Let's begin our lesson and find out!

c. Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, you are our true Lifesaver. Even when we face seemingly impossible challenges, you are there to guide us through them. Help us to trust you and lean on your promises, as Paul did. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- "Eternal Father, Strong to Save" (hymn)
- "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" (hymn)

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the New Testament
- Scripture Section: Mission

As the apostles traveled from place to place, they started new congregations in the towns they visited. In spite of rejection and persecution, the message of Jesus spread throughout the Roman Empire.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level:

Children: Read aloud the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read aloud Scripture from the Bible

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Pre-Readers: Coloring Page and Activity

Elementary: Children's Pages (Worksheet and Drama)

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, and Questions)

Adults: Bible Study (Large or Small Group Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. Use the Bible Rhyme as a short review, or simply ask questions to help the students recall the events of the story.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Pre-Readers: Teacher leads a simple prayer

Children: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format



Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: Acts 27:18-44

1. Read the lead up to today's story in Acts 25:6-12. What did Paul say in his own defense (v. 8)?

Paul argued in his defense, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense." He added: "If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar." (v.11)

2. What was the final destination for Paul's journey (Acts 27:1-3)? What country is that in? Who was assigned to guard Paul along the way? How did he treat Paul?

Paul was headed to Rome, which is in the country of Italy. They were traveling by ship, across the Mediterranean Sea. A Roman centurion (military officer) named Julius served as his official escort.

3. According to verses 9-11, Paul was not afraid to speak up. Why do you think none of the sailors were willing to listen to Paul? What did they think of him?

People on the ship considered Paul to be a lowly criminal, not worth listening to. They were the professional sailors, after all! What the sailors didn't know was that Paul was on a mission from God and that God was leading him to Rome.

4. What was the promise that the angel gave to Paul on the ship (vs. 21-26)? What mission did God want Paul to complete?

The angel promised that even though the ship would go down, all the people would be saved. The angel told him there was no need to be afraid, because God would see that they reached Rome. God wanted Paul to testify before the Emperor. (Note the "I told you so" Paul sneaks into verse 21.)

5. How does faith in God give us hope and confidence, even when our circumstances seem hopeless and grim? How do you see this in the attitude of Paul compared to the attitude of the sailors?

Faith is not a confidence that rests in our circumstances or in our own human power to overcome challenges. Faith rests in our trust and hope in God alone. We trust that God has the

power to save us, and that he actually cares for us — even when the circumstances may suggest the opposite. Notice that the sailors were facing the same situation as Paul, yet you can see they were in a fearful panic. Some wanted to kill off the prisoners; others wanted to abandon ship and leave the others to die!

6. Why did the soldiers plan to kill the prisoners (v. 42)? Who stopped them? In what way can you tell that God was already working on the centurion?

The soldiers thought the prisoners would use the shipwreck as an opportunity to escape. A similar thing happened in Acts 16:25-27, when the jailer who was holding Paul and Silas assumed that they would have used the opportunity of a natural disaster to escape.

In today's story, the centurion Julius prevented the soldiers from killing the prisoners because he was beginning to see that Paul was no ordinary criminal. From his brief time with Paul, he already knew the apostle to be a man of integrity, who was under the protection of God.

7. Read Jonah 2:2-9. How was Jonah's experience similar to that of Paul? What same power was at work in both men's lives?

The Book of Jonah tells the story of a servant of God, Jonah, who was also on a journey across the Mediterranean Sea by ship. That ship also ventured into a terrible storm, where the sailors had to throw cargo overboard to stay afloat. In Jonah's case, the sailors actually did try to kill Jonah by throwing him overboard. But just as God did in the case of Paul, God protected Jonah and eventually brought him safely to dry land. God had missions for both men.

8. Read Psalm 18:13-19. Are people of faith immune from trouble and hardship in life? In what sense is God's power something to be feared? How is this same almighty power of God also the source of our faith and hope?

In Psalm 18, the writer uses the image of storm and sea to describe the trouble and dangers we human beings face daily — even as people of faith. Believers are not immune to the troubles of the world; bad things happen to everyone.

Faith, however, is what gives us the strength and confidence to get through difficult times. Even though we ourselves are weak and helpless at times, God is strong and faithful. As Paul himself once said, "For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:9-11).

Classroom Craft and Activity Page

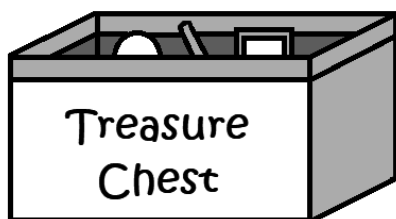
Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Buried Treasure Activity

For all children

Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- Timer
- Shoebox or other opaque box with a cover
- Many small “treasures” such as different coins, a dollar bill, maps, photos of various lands, a spoon and fork, writing utensils, small animal toys, a string of beads, and so on



Instructions:

Before class: Place the treasures in the box and cover it.

When it's time for the activity: Explain that when people find shipwrecks on the bottom of the ocean, they often look for treasure chests in the hope of finding gold and other valuable things.

Invite kids to stand around your treasure chest. Set a timer for 2 to 5 minutes and open the box.

Tell kids to notice and remember as many items in the chest as possible without touching anything.

When the timer sounds, replace the cover on the chest and have kids sit down.

Give everyone a piece of paper and a pencil. Set a timer once again for about 5 minutes. Ask kids to list as many things as they can remember from the box. Very young kids can work as a team to tell you what they remember. Write their list on the board.

When this is done, take items out of the box, one by one, and show them to the kids.

Invite kids to make a check mark on their paper by the item if they had remembered to list it. Go through each item in the box this way.

Next, have kids count up the number of check marks they have on their paper. Whoever has the most wins the game.

Activity 2: Shipwreck Game

For all children

Materials Needed:

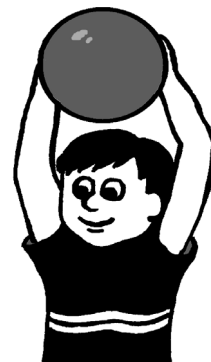
- Large area to play a game
- Various soft pillows, soft beach balls, or Nerf balls
- Masking tape

Instructions:

Divide the class into two teams.

One team is the waves in the sea, and the other team is the swimmers. The object of the game is for the swimmers to get from one end of the room to the other, dodging flotsam and jetsam — the pillows or balls tossed at them by waves in the sea — as they go. To play:

- Using masking tape, create a starting line and a finishing line at opposite ends of a large, open room. The starting line represents the ship. The finishing line represents the shore. The area in between is the ocean.
- Invite the waves in the sea to sit along both walls of the room. Give each person one soft pillow or beach ball.
- Invite the swimmers to stand behind the starting line.
- When you say, “Swim for shore!” the swimmers will begin making their way to the other end of the room. During this time, the waves in the sea have one chance to toss flotsam and jetsam at a swimmer. (No aiming at anyone's head.)
- If a swimmer is hit once, that person must turn around and continue their journey backwards. If hit twice, that swimmer “sinks” and must sit in place.
- Count how many swimmers are able to cross the finish line. Then switch teams and play a new round. The team with the most to have crossed the finish line in its round wins the game.

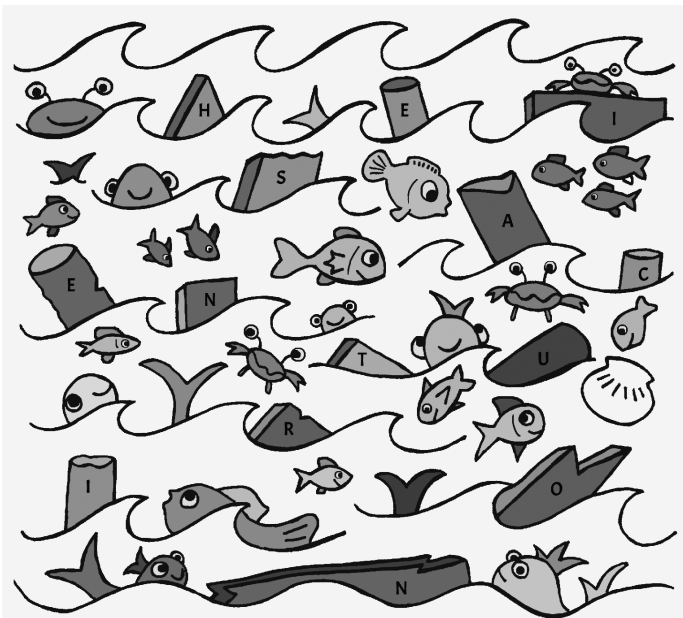


When Paul and the others were shipwrecked, they swam for shore, holding on to broken pieces of the ship or whatever they could find. Waves probably pushed things at them, and it had to have been exhausting. Yet God protected Paul and the others, and amazingly, all survived!

Worksheet Answer Key

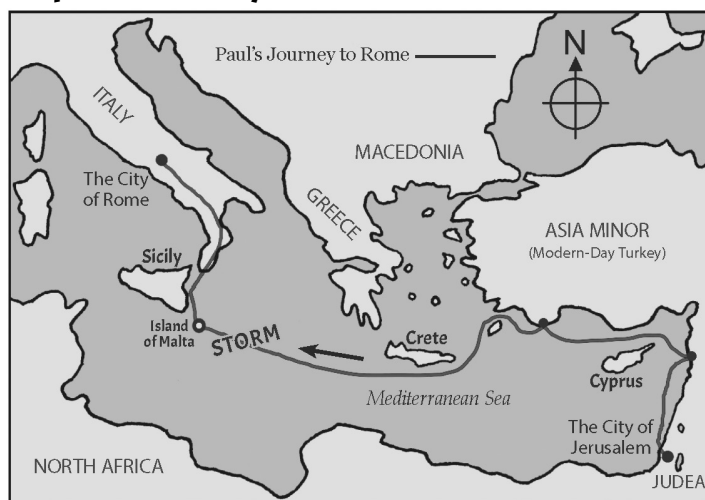
Shown below are the answers and solution to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:

There are 14 pieces of wood. This is the number of days that Paul's ship was at sea in the storm!



As Paul's guard on the ship, what Roman military rank does Julius have? **HE IS A CENTURION.** (A centurion was the commander of 100 Roman soldiers.)

Map Answer Key



- What three large islands did Paul pass on the way?
Cyprus, Crete, and Sicily
- What was the name of the small island where Paul was shipwrecked? **Malta**

Reflection for the Week Ahead

At different times, each of us has "storms" in our lives. They may not be as dire as what Paul faced, but they are upsetting and frightening experiences, just the same.

What does today's Bible story have to teach us about facing unexpected and scary events? First and foremost, that difficult things happen, even to very faithful people (like Paul). Faithfulness does not protect us from challenges. Second, that God does not abandon us during those times, even if we feel like we are flailing on the sea. Finally, that our challenges can later help others. Just think: Paul's story is still giving us courage, even today! If he'd had an easy and uneventful life, would we take inspiration from that? Probably not. It was his faith under fire, and God's care during it all, that gives us hope in our own lives.

Talk to one another about these questions:

How did God deliver Paul and the others from the shipwreck? What role did Paul's faith play in how he handled that experience?

Tell about a time you have faced a storm in your own life. What helped you through that?

The Practice of Prayer

On the lines below, write a prayer asking for a deeper faith that trusts on the Lord God.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.

A: _____

D: _____

T: _____

R: _____

C: _____