



UNIT 34 | SESSION 3

## PAUL VISITED THE CHURCHES

ACTS 18–21

### KEY PASSAGE:

Psalm 96:3

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is our mission as Christians? Our mission is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### 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.



## PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



## LEADER Bible Study

This session, we read of Paul's determination to extend Christ's invitation of faith to non-believers and to deepen the faith of those who were believers. No part of this third missionary journey proved to be easy. Still, Paul knew his purpose was to proclaim the gospel to all who would listen, testifying to the grace he'd so freely received.

What propelled Paul forward on his voyages, despite the dangers and troubles he faced? What drew others to listen to him, believing in the gospel he'd committed his life to proclaim?

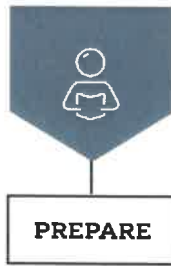
In Acts 18:9, the Lord declared to the apostle Paul in a night vision, "Don't be afraid, but keep on speaking and don't be silent..." These words strengthened him amidst the legal allegations he faced in Corinth and even further as he traveled throughout Asia on mission for the gospel. It was Paul's steadfast conviction that made others hone in on the words he spoke about God's kingdom. They listened as he gave of his time, committing months and sometimes even years of his life to growing his disciples in the faith. He taught diligently and passionately, believing that God would be faithful to open the people's hearts toward His truth.

Paul faced opposition from idol worshipers in Ephesus, as well as from Jews who plotted against him as he began to set sail for Syria. The gospel was controversial on all sides—for all who did not believe Jesus was the only way to the one, true God. Even still, God protected Paul throughout this journey, and the missionary even declared that the value of his life could only be found in proclaiming Christ's truth.

Though Paul ventured to so many places, met so many people, and experienced so many different cultures, it all points back to the incredible God who safely led him on this journey for the spread of the gospel. Help your kids see that we serve the same God that Paul did, and that He is worthy of our trust and obedience as we set sail on mission—near or far—so that others would know His saving love in Christ. May we, too, seize every opportunity to share His love with all who may hear.

### EVENTS TO KNOW

**Paul's Third Journey:** Paul traveled through various regions, including Ephesus, preaching and performing miracles. He continued to spread Christianity despite opposition.



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

- ☐ "What's the Way?" activity page

#### Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ crepe party streamers, 3

#### Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ poster papers, 5 or 6



### LEARN

#### Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video

#### Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

#### Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

#### Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "Paul Visited the Churches" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ New Testament Mediterranean Map (optional)

#### Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 34, Session 3" questions from kids video

#### Missions Moment

- ☐ "Chicago Ministry Center Photos" printable

#### Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "His Glory Among the Nations (Psalm 96:3)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ ball



### LOVE

#### Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



### LIVE

#### Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ balls, 2

#### Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster
- ☐ index cards, 32

#### Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible Story Coloring Page (optional)



## 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** “What do you not give up on? Maybe your family, a sport, or a school project. Why don’t you give up?”

### 1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “What’s the Way?” on the activity page.

**SAY** “Paul traveled to many cities and visited churches. Everywhere he went he never gave up on telling people about Jesus.”

### 2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

#### ☐ OPTION 1: FINISH THE RACE



Invite three kids to stand at the front of the room. Unroll three crepe party streamers until each is about 10 feet long. Then give one to each kid. On your start, direct kids to roll up the streamer until no overhang remains. Consider demonstrating how to do this, if needed. The first kid to finish rolling up the streamer wins. Repeat, calling on different kids to race against one another.

**SAY** “As you raced against one another, you had a job to do. You needed to finish rolling up the streamer. This reminds me of how the apostle Paul said he had to finish the job God gave him to do. Even when sharing about Jesus got hard, Paul didn’t give up. He trusted God and was ready to finish the race well. Let’s learn more about the important work of Paul.”

#### ☐ OPTION 2: TRAVELING POSTERS

Before the session, tape five or six large poster papers to various walls of the room. Make sure they are low enough for kids to reach from the top to the bottom. Provide each kid with a marker and form kids into groups of five or six.

Tell the groups that they will be traveling together to each poster on the wall. Explain that you will give them one minute at each poster where they should draw a picture that is encouraging, shares good news, or tells about Jesus. Tell kids they can also write encouraging messages on the paper as well. Send each group to their first poster. Then after a minute, direct kids to rotate to a new poster. Repeat until each group has traveled to each poster.

**SAY** “Just as you traveled to share pictures or messages of encouragement, the apostle Paul spent time traveling to different cities and churches sharing the good news of Jesus. Today, we’ll learn more about where he traveled and what he shared.”

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** “ Good morning! My name is [your name]. For the past couple of weeks, we have been learning about how Paul and other Christians shared the gospel. They worked hard to make sure that everyone heard the good news about Jesus. The Lord was with them through His Spirit and many people heard and believed in Jesus.

Let's take out our Bibles and get ready to learn more about Paul and his work to teach others about Jesus. Does anyone remember what book of the Bible we have been studying? [Allow responses.] Yes, the book of Acts! [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] ”

#### 2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

**SAY** “ Let's say our big picture question together. What is our mission as Christians? Now, let's say the answer, Our mission is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In our Bible story, we'll be reminded that Paul made it his mission to tell everyone about Jesus. He gave his whole life to traveling and preaching. Do you think every Christian is called to tell others about Jesus? [Allow responses.] Every Christian is called to share the good news with those around them. Maybe one day God will call you to be a missionary like Paul, or maybe He will have you share Jesus with people in your hometown. **Our mission is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit.** ”

#### 3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

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

**SAY** “ We have been learning how the early church was on mission to tell all people about Jesus. A few weeks ago, we learned about a very important meeting in the early church where they agreed that all people are saved by faith in Jesus. Both Jews and Gentiles need to hear the gospel and trust in Jesus to be saved. Then we learned that Paul continued the work God gave him to do. Paul was a missionary who traveled to many cities sharing the gospel. Today, we will learn about another missionary journey Paul took as he traveled to more churches. ”





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LEARN the Bible Story



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

Open your Bible to Acts 18–21. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Paul Visited the Churches.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

### PAUL VISITED THE CHURCHES

**Paul visited churches throughout Asia and helped the believers grow stronger in their faith. When Paul arrived in the city of Ephesus, he met about twelve men who believed in God. They knew about John the Baptist, but they didn't know about Jesus or the Holy Spirit. So Paul told them about Jesus. The men believed and were baptized.**

**Paul went into the synagogue and spent three months teaching and talking about the kingdom of God. Then he spent two years discussing God's Word with those who were interested. God was working through Paul, doing amazing miracles.** People would carry cloths that had touched Paul to people who were sick, and those people were healed. When this happened, even more people believed in Jesus.

Now **some people in Ephesus** didn't like what Paul was doing. They **didn't like that Paul was teaching that there is one true God, because those people worshiped many gods.** The crowds shouted and caused trouble for Paul. When the crowds finally quieted down, **Paul met with some of Jesus' followers. He encouraged them, and then he said goodbye and continued on his journey toward Jerusalem.**

**One night, Paul met with a group of people to eat the Lord's Supper.** He talked to the group until midnight. **As Paul spoke, a young man named Eutychus (YOO tih kuhs) was sitting in the window. He listened to Paul talking and became very sleepy. When he fell asleep, he fell out the window—three stories down to the ground! Eutychus was dead, but Paul went to his side and put his arms around him, and Eutychus came back to life.** Paul continued talking until the morning. Then the believers took Eutychus home, and they were greatly comforted.

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.**

#### STORYTELLING TIPS

**Point to a map:** Use the New Testament Mediterranean Map and point to Ephesus (D7) and Jerusalem (G9) as you mention them in the story.

**Use movement:** Travel about the room as you teach about the different places Paul traveled.



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

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. ”

### 2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

**SAY** “ Our Bible story today taught us about the third time Paul went into the world to tell others about Jesus. Do you remember the name of one of the cities Paul traveled to? **[Allow responses.]** He traveled to many places and churches, but he spent the most time in the city of Ephesus. Paul was in Ephesus for over three years preaching and teaching the people about the good news of Jesus.

How did the people in Ephesus feel about Paul sharing the gospel? **[Allow responses.]** Some people were angry with Paul because they didn’t like his message. They didn’t want to worship the one true God. But some people listened to Paul and trusted in Jesus. Even when Paul faced trouble from others, he never gave up and continued to tell everyone about Jesus.

God used Paul to preach the good news, perform miracles, and encourage other Christians. Paul lived his life with the goal of being on mission for God. He wanted to tell as many people as possible about Jesus. Like Paul, we are called to be on mission for God. What is our mission? **[Allow responses.] Our mission is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit. ”**

### 3 CHRIST CONNECTION

**SAY** “ 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. ”

(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 34, Session 3” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Should we bring our Bible to school?
2. How does sharing the gospel with unbelievers glorify God and encourage other Christians?

### 5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

**SAY** “ Chicago is a city with many different communities or neighborhoods. Of Chicago’s 77 neighborhoods, some are wealthy while others are very poor. ”

Display the “Chicago Ministry Center Photos” printable. Tell kids that Chicago West Bible Church prayed for a building that they could work out of to bring hope and the good news of Jesus to the area. Share that in 2020, pastors of Chicago West and Send Relief met and had the dream to start the ministry center. Explain that in 2021, Send Relief purchased the building, and Chicago West Bible Church moved into the building to help with the work of the



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

Chicago Ministry Center. Explain that in the area surrounding the Chicago Ministry Center, many people speak a language other than English as their first language. Remind kids that the Ministry Center works to help people in need while telling them about Jesus. Pray for the people working through the Chicago Ministry Center to help meet the needs of the people in the community and that they would have the opportunity to tell them about Jesus.

### 6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 96:3 together.

**SAY** 🗣️ We were made to know God and tell everyone how great He is. He has done wonderful works, including sending Jesus to save those who trust in Him. We want everyone to praise Him for all He has done. 🗣️

Gather kids into a circle. Invite the kids to recite the key passage together while they pass a ball around the circle. Whoever is holding the ball at the end of the key passage steps out of the circle. Continue until only one kid remains.

Lead kids to sing “His Glory Among the Nations (Psalm 96:3).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

### 7 PRAY (2 minutes)

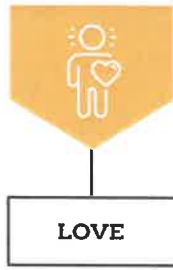
Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

**SAY** 🗣️ God, You are wonderful and glorious! We are so thankful we get to learn more about You. Help us live for You and declare Your glory to others as we share about Jesus. 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 21. Explain that sometimes when we read the Bible we may read about places we do not know. Tell kids that it helps to have a map to show us where these places are located. Explain that in many Bibles we can find maps. Lead kids to look in their Bibles for maps. Consider pointing out the location of Ephesus (D7) on the New Testament Mediterranean Map.

Choose a volunteer to read aloud Acts 21:13 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

**SAY** 🗨️ Paul knew that when he arrived in Jerusalem he would have difficulties, but he was still determined to go. More than being kept safe or having an easy time or staying with his friends, Paul wanted to live for Jesus. He was willing to be thrown in prison or die for the name of Jesus. Paul wanted his life to be all about sharing the gospel. 🗨️

#### **2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)**

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

**SAY** 🗨️ Why did Paul want his life to be about sharing Jesus with others? 🗨️

Discuss how Paul was a faithful missionary who shared about Jesus even when it meant he would suffer. Share how Paul had been saved and changed from the inside out by Jesus. Explain that he knew people's only hope of being saved from sin was to trust in Jesus.

**SAY** 🗨️ Why shouldn't we give up sharing the gospel even when people are mean to us? 🗨️

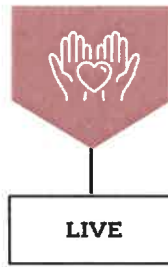
Remind kids that Paul never gave up sharing Jesus with others. Discuss how we may face hard times because of our faith, but everyone needs to hear the good news. Tell kids that God has promised to be with us and give us strength. Remind kids that we persevere in our faith, knowing we have a great reward in heaven. (Matthew 5:12)

**SAY** 🗨️ What is our mission as Christians? 🗨️

Remind kids of the big picture question answer: **Our mission is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit.** Discuss how we are all called to tell others the good news of Jesus. Remind kids that God helps us through His Spirit by giving us words to say, showing us opportunities to share, and giving us courage to speak. Tell kids that God can use them, like He did Paul, to help friends, classmates, and family members know how Jesus can save them from their sins.

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





## THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

### **LIVE** the Mission

#### **1 ACTIVITY CHOICE** (10 minutes)

##### ☐ **OPTION 1: PARTNER UP!**



Form kids into two teams. Tell players of each team to partner with another person on his team. Explain that partners from each team will carry a ball to one end of the room and back in different ways each round. For example, kids can carry the ball elbow to elbow, knee to knee, hand to hand, back to back, and so forth. Tell kids to pass the ball to the next pair on their team when they return. The team to have all partners complete the task first wins.

**SAY** *“It took a partnership to complete the relay, just like the Chicago Ministry Center partners with other organizations to tell people about Jesus. They work together to meet needs of the people in the community and tell them about Jesus. As the church, we work together to share the gospel with people as well.”*

##### ☐ **OPTION 2: MISSION POSSIBLE**

Before the session, write each word of the big picture answer on individual index cards. Create two sets. Form kids into two teams. Explain that kids from each team will compete against each other to flip to specific books of the Bible you call out. Tell kids that whoever finds the book first receives a card with a word from the big picture answer. Provide the first kids from each team with a Bible and call out a book such as “Matthew.” Repeat until a team has collected all of the big picture answer cards. Invite the team to read the big picture answer aloud to the group.

**SAY** *“Our mission is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit. When you come to church and learn from God’s Word, you are better prepared to know the gospel and share it with others. Knowing God’s Word and the stories of the Bible helps us tell others what we’ve learned. We can trust that the Holy Spirit will help us as we share Jesus with others.”*

#### **2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER** (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

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

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids.

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