

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

- ☐ "What's Different?" activity page

#### Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ plastic wrap
- ☐ bag of candies



### 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)



### LOVE

#### Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



### LIVE

#### Activity Choice (Option 1)

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

#### Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

#### 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** 🗨️ Have you ever gotten in trouble for something you didn't do? What happened? 🗨️

### 1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete "What's Different?" on the activity page.

**| SAY** 🗨️ We found many things wrong that made the pictures different from one another. But in today's story, we will learn that even though Paul didn't do anything wrong, he was a prisoner. 🗨️

### 2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

#### ☐ OPTION 1: SPEAK THE TRUTH



Direct kids to finish each sentence below with a word that makes the sentence true as you say them aloud. Consider forming kids into groups of three or four and allowing each group a turn to answer.

- The Creator of the world is \_\_\_\_\_. (God)
- The answer to  $2+2$  is \_\_\_\_\_. (four)
- Red and yellow make the color \_\_\_\_\_. (orange)
- The only person to never sin is \_\_\_\_\_. (Jesus.)
- There are seven days in a \_\_\_\_\_. (week)
- The biggest land animal is the \_\_\_\_\_. (elephant)

**| SAY** 🗨️ The words you provided made each sentence true. Any other word would make those sentences false. Today, we will learn that some people thought Paul was crazy and wasn't speaking truth. But we'll see that Paul only spoke the truth and wanted people to believe in Jesus. 🗨️

#### ☐ OPTION 2: WAIT FOR IT!



Before the session, wrap a bag of candy in several layers of plastic wrap so that it creates a ball shape. Be sure to include enough layers that will require kids several minutes to unwrap.

Invite kids to sit in a large circle. Choose one kid to begin and direct her to pull back a piece of the plastic wrap. You may need to indicate where to begin pulling. Guide her to pass the ball to her right and direct the next kid to pull back a piece of the plastic wrap. Continue leading kids to unwrap the plastic ball while you build the anticipation of what's inside. Emphasize the importance of having to wait for the contents to be revealed. Once kids have unwrapped the plastic, allow them to eat a piece of candy.

**| SAY** 🗨️ It took patience to wait for the surprise inside the plastic wrap. Sometimes it can be hard to wait, especially if you are going through a hard time or have a really exciting event ahead. Today, we'll learn that Paul had to wait in prison until he could go to Rome. Let's see how Paul trusted in God and shared the gospel as he waited. 🗨️

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.] God’s Word is true and trustworthy. Through God’s Word we can know Jesus and how He saves us from sin.

Today, we will learn that Paul trusted God’s Word and shared it with others. He believed the gospel and wanted to share the truth about Jesus with all people. Our Bible story will help us understand how Paul used every chance he could get to tell people about Jesus, even when he was in prison waiting to go to Rome.”

Worship → \* Praise \* offering.  
\* Living Hope

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

- ✓ **SAY** “Let’s review our big picture question: 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.

What does it mean to praise Jesus? What does this look like? [Allow responses.] Praise is our response to Jesus because of who He is and what He has done. We can praise Jesus in many ways. We can praise Him through giving, prayer, obedience, singing, and sharing the gospel. When we praise Jesus, we are showing Him that our hearts love Him and He is more important than anything else. Today, we will see that Paul showed praise to Jesus when he continued to share the gospel even while in prison. Paul showed that Jesus is most valuable to him.”

#### 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

#### STORYTELLING TIPS

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

**Shout “good news”:** Invite kids to shout “good news” when Paul told King Agrippa how he became a believer.



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

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. ”

### 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. Paul had not done anything to deserve being in prison, but God used Paul’s imprisonment to preach the good news to people who needed to hear. Who were some of the people Paul shared the gospel with while he was in prison? [Allow responses.] Paul shared the gospel with Felix and his wife, Festus, King Agrippa, and Queen Bernice. Paul was not afraid or ashamed to tell others about Jesus.

When Paul shared his faith in Jesus with Felix, he told Felix that God was going to judge the world. This made Felix afraid. Why do you think Felix was afraid? [Allow responses.] Felix did not have right standing with God because he had not placed his faith in Jesus. Felix deserved God’s judgment on his sin because he had not trusted in Jesus to save him from the punishment sin deserves. In that moment, Felix had a chance to turn from sin and trust in Jesus, but instead he sent Paul away.

Then Paul shared his faith in Jesus with King Agrippa and Queen Bernice. He told them how Jesus had saved him and how all who trust in Jesus will be raised to new life. What did Festus call Paul when he mentioned the resurrection? [Allow responses.] Festus said Paul was crazy! What do you think? Was Paul crazy? [Allow responses.] Paul was not crazy but spoke the truth. He shared that Jesus is the only way to eternal life. Paul wanted everyone to believe in Jesus. Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be raised to new life and live with Him forever.

All of these events happened just like God said they would. Even before Paul started his missionary journeys, God said that Paul would take the gospel to Jews, Gentiles, and even kings. (Acts 9:15) We can learn from Paul and follow his example by sharing the gospel with whoever God leads us to. ”

### 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)

✳ Before the session, write a scrambled version of the key passage on a dry erase board. Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Isaiah 25:1 together.

**SAY** 🗣️ Our key passage reminds us that God has been at work since the very beginning. Isaiah praises God for the wonderful things He has done—things which were planned long ago that have been performed with perfect faithfulness. 🙌

✳ Direct kids to look at the dry erase board with the scrambled key passage. Lead kids to determine how the key passage can be unscrambled and placed back in the correct order. Invite kids to take turns unscrambling the words or form kids into teams and have them write the correct order of the key passage on a piece of paper.

✳ 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)

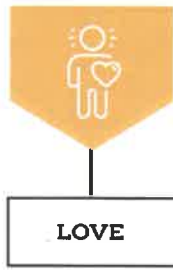
Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

**SAY** 🗣️ God, thank You for Jesus. Thank You that He took the punishment we deserve for our sins. Help us trust in Him and praise Him for all He has done for us. 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 24. Explain the different categories of New Testament books. Tell kids that the Gospels tell the story of Jesus's ministry, death, and resurrection. Point out the Letter books, such as Ephesians and 1 Timothy, which were written to churches or people. Tell kids that Revelation is a book of prophecy. Then share that Acts is a book of church history.

Consider pointing out the location of Caesarea (F9) and Rome (B1) on the New Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Acts 24:27 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

**SAY** 🗨️ How long was Paul in prison for doing nothing wrong? [Allow responses.] Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea for at least two years before being brought before Festus for trial. Paul had a long time to wait in prison, but he didn't waste this time. Instead, Paul continued to share the good news with those who would listen.

We might have times we have to wait for God to answer a prayer or for something to happen. But like Paul, we can use our time wisely and share Jesus with others. We can be faithful to the mission God has called us to, and we can praise Jesus even in the waiting. 🙌

#### 2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

**SAY** 🗨️ Jesus was falsely accused by unbelieving Jews. We read that Paul was also falsely accused and imprisoned for his faith. Does this happen today? Why? 🙌

Discuss how Christians today may still be falsely accused, imprisoned, and even killed for their faith in Jesus. Tell kids that the world is against Jesus and His followers. Encourage kids to remember that Jesus is with us, understands how it feels when we are persecuted, and is honored when we choose Him over the comforts of the world.

**SAY** 🗨️ Why do you think Paul wasn't afraid to keep sharing the gospel even in prison? 🙌

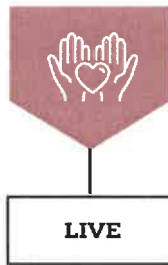
Lead kids to think about how Paul believed every word of the gospel and knew it was the only way for people to be saved. Tell kids that to not share the gospel means keeping the best news from people who need to hear it. Encourage kids to share their faith.

**SAY** 🗨️ Paul asked to go to Rome to see Caesar, and Festus said he could go. How does this show that God's word is always true? 🙌

Remind kids that God had told Paul he would go to Rome and take the gospel there. Discuss how we can trust God's Word and believe that everything He tells us is true. Share how we can read our Bibles to know God's Word and believe His promises.

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: SHARE IT!**



Form kids into two groups. Name one group the sharers and the other group the hearers. Gather the sharers together and give them all a message to share with the hearers such as “God loves you” or “Jesus died for your sin.” Lead the hearers to scatter about the room. Then send the sharers to find one of the hearers to share their message with. Continue playing, switching kids from being a sharer and a hearer and changing up the message each time. Consider adding other challenges such as inviting kids to come up with their own message about Jesus to share or sharing the message with someone who has a different hair color than them.

**SAY** “Paul was a sharer of the good news about Jesus. He wanted everyone to be a hearer and believe in Jesus. This game helped us practice being a sharer and a hearer so we can go tell others the good news about Jesus with people who need to believe in Him.”

#### 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.