



PAUL'S LIFE AND MINISTRY

Date: 09.21.25 | Paul Heads to Rome
Scripture: Acts 27-28:1-16

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

MIDDLE SCHOOL:

- God values all people and calls Christians to live on mission for the sake of reaching the lost with the gospel.
- God continues to work in the world, and people are invited to join Him in His work.
- We are to be involved in reaching the nations through prayer, giving resources, acting with love, and sharing the gospel.
- The church is a fellowship of believers, and we are called to meet together regularly.
- The church is not a place or a building, but rather a community of people who belong to the family of God.

HIGH SCHOOL:

- God values all people---born and unborn, young and old, male and female, all ethnicities, those of opposing faiths---and calls Christians to live on mission for the sake of reaching the lost through prayer, giving resources, acting with love, and sharing the gospel.
- God continues to work in the world, and as we join Him in His work, He uses people to accomplish His eternal purposes.
- We demonstrate honor for God when we respect the earthly authorities God has placed in our lives.
- The church is a community of believers called to gather regularly to study Scripture, pray, worship, serve, encourage one another, and proclaim the gospel to the world.
- The church is called to train and equip its members for works of ministry.



MEMORY VERSE

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. - Romans 1:16a

16 F l a n a o t g, f i i t p o G f s t e w b, - use this first letter memorization tool that aids in remembering text by using the first letter of each word as a cue.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

“Storm Survival”

Set up: Tell students they are on a ship in a storm. Give them three quick “survival” scenarios (multiple choice). Example:

1. The ship is breaking apart. Do you (a) hold on to cargo, (b) jump and swim, or (c) stay put and trust instructions?
2. You’ve been drifting without food for days. Do you (a) panic, (b) ration your food, or (c) trust God to provide?
3. You finally land on an unknown island. Do you (a) complain, (b) explore, or (c) help others first?

Discussion: After each choice, quickly reveal what Paul and the sailors actually did. Emphasize how Paul trusted God’s promise in the chaos.

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Back in [Acts 23](#), Paul was arrested in Jerusalem after the Jewish leaders stirred up trouble against him ([Acts 23:10](#)). That night, the Lord stood by Paul and encouraged him, saying, “Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome” ([Acts 23:11](#)). Soon after, more than 40 Jews formed a conspiracy, vowing not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. When word of the plot reached the Roman commander, Paul was escorted by night with 470 soldiers—including horsemen and spearmen—safely out of Jerusalem to Caesarea ([Acts 23:23-24](#)).

In Caesarea, Paul stood trial before Governor Felix ([Acts 24:1-23](#)). Although Felix found no guilt in Paul, he left him in prison for two years, hoping Paul would offer him money for his release ([Acts 24:26-27](#)). When Festus succeeded Felix, the Jewish leaders pressed again for Paul’s condemnation ([Acts 25:1-7](#)). But Paul boldly appealed his case to Caesar in Rome ([Acts 25:10-12](#)). Before he was sent, Paul also spoke courageously to King Agrippa about Jesus ([Acts 26:1-29](#)). Agrippa concluded, “This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment” ([Acts 26:31-32](#)). Still, because Paul had appealed to Caesar, he was ordered to Rome.

Paul was handed over to Julius, a centurion of the Imperial Regiment ([Acts 27:1](#)). A centurion commanded about 100 soldiers within a cohort, a military unit of 600–1,000 men. Ten cohorts collectively formed a Roman legion. Centurions were well-paid—sometimes five times the salary of an ordinary soldier—socially prominent, and often wealthy. Julius belonged to a special corps that acted as trusted liaisons between the Emperor and the provinces, a mark of honor and responsibility.

Paul was not alone. Luke, the author of Acts, traveled with him, as shown by the “we” statements ([Acts 27:1, 28:16](#)). Aristarchus, a believer from Thessalonica, also made the trip. In [Colossians 4:10](#), Paul later referred to him as a “fellow prisoner,” showing his willingness to endure hardship alongside Paul. Neither Luke nor Aristarchus was granted free passage; they likely paid their own way. It was risky to be associated with a prisoner, but both were devoted to the Lord and to Paul.

They first boarded a small ship from Adramyttium, a coasting vessel unsuited for open-sea travel to Rome ([Acts 27:2](#)). From Caesarea, they sailed north to Sidon, where Julius showed kindness by allowing Paul to visit his friends and receive supplies ([Acts 27:3](#)). This generosity was unusual for a centurion. Still, God’s providence was already at work.

Leaving Sidon, strong seasonal winds made progress difficult, forcing them to sail north of Cyprus for shelter ([Acts 27:4](#)). After passing Cilicia and Pamphylia, they reached Myra, where Julius transferred the prisoners to a large Alexandrian grain ship bound for Italy ([Acts 27:5-6](#)). These massive ships carried essential food supplies for Rome and often had hundreds of passengers in addition to cargo.

From Myra, the journey grew worse. The winds pushed them off course, and instead of sailing past Rhodes and north of Crete, they struggled slowly westward. They barely managed to reach Fair Havens on the southern coast of Crete ([Acts 27:7-8](#)). By then, much time had been lost, and it was after the Day of Atonement (late September or October) when sailing became dangerous. Most navigation stopped altogether from November to March. Paul, an experienced traveler who had already been shipwrecked three times ([2 Corinthians 11:25](#)), warned them: “Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also” ([Acts 27:9-10](#)). But the pilot and owner persuaded the centurion to continue toward Phoenix, a more sheltered harbor ([Acts 27:11-12](#)).

At first, a gentle south wind seemed favorable ([Acts 27:13](#)). But soon, a violent northeaster swept down from the island ([Acts 27:14-15](#)). The storm was so fierce that the ship was driven helplessly out to sea. Near the small island of Clauda, they barely secured the lifeboat and used ropes to undergird the hull, fearing the sandbars of Syrtis off the coast of North Africa, infamous as a graveyard for ships ([Acts 27:16-17](#)).

For days, they fought desperately. Cargo was thrown overboard, then even the ship’s tackle was abandoned. Without sun or stars to guide them, all hope of survival was abandoned ([Acts 27:18-20](#)).

It was then that Paul, standing in the midst of despair, spoke with courage. He reminded them that they should have listened to him at Crete, but more importantly, he shared God’s promise: ‘Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, “Do not be afraid, Paul.” You must stand trial before Caesar, and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you’ ([Acts 27:23-24](#)). Unlike Jonah, whose presence brought danger to his shipmates, Paul’s presence guaranteed their survival.

On the fourteenth night, the storm had driven them into the Adriatic Sea. The sailors sensed land and took soundings, finding the depth decreasing. Fearing they might run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors and prayed for daylight ([Acts 27:27-29](#)). Some sailors attempted to escape in the lifeboat, but Paul warned the centurion, “Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved” ([Acts 27:31](#)). The soldiers cut the ropes, allowing the boat to drift away ([Acts 27:32](#)).

As dawn approached, Paul urged everyone to eat. For 14 days, they had been in suspense and barely eaten. Taking bread, he gave thanks to God before them all, then broke it and ate ([Acts 27:33-35](#)). This act of faith encouraged the 276 people on board to eat as well ([Acts 27:36-37](#)). Afterwards, they threw the remaining grain into the sea to lighten the ship ([Acts 27:38](#)).

At daylight, they saw a bay with a sandy beach and attempted to run the ship aground. But striking a sandbar, the vessel stuck fast, battered by waves until it began to break apart ([Acts 27:39-41](#)). The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent escape—since Roman guards could be executed if their prisoners fled—but the centurion, determined to save Paul, stopped them ([Acts 27:42-43](#)). He ordered those who could swim to jump first, and the rest to follow on planks and debris. Just as God had promised, all safely reached shore ([Acts 27:44](#)).

Once ashore, they learned the island was Malta ([Acts 28:1](#)). The islanders showed unusual kindness, building a fire for the drenched survivors ([Acts 28:2](#)). As Paul gathered sticks, a viper fastened on his hand. The islanders assumed he must be a murderer who escaped the sea only to face divine justice. But Paul shook the snake into the fire, suffering no harm ([Acts 28:3-5](#)). When he did not die, they concluded he must be a god ([Acts 28:6](#)). Instead, Paul used the opportunity to glorify God, healing the father of Publius, the chief official of the island, and many others as well ([Acts 28:7-9](#)). In gratitude, the islanders supplied them generously for the rest of their voyage ([Acts 28:10](#)).

After three months, when winter was over, Paul and his companions boarded another Alexandrian grain ship and sailed north to Syracuse, then Rhegium, before arriving at Puteoli in Italy ([Acts 28:11-13](#)). There, they found believers and stayed for a week ([Acts 28:14](#)). As Paul traveled toward Rome, groups of Christians came out to meet him on the Appian Way. Overwhelmed with gratitude, Paul thanked God and took courage ([Acts 28:15](#)).

At last, Paul arrived in Rome, where he would live under house arrest but continue to boldly proclaim the kingdom of God and teach about Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance ([Acts 28:16, 30-31](#)). The Lord had been faithful to His promise from [Acts 23:11](#), carrying Paul safely through plots, prison, storms, and shipwrecks, all the way to the heart of the empire.

LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY

Remind your group that we are studying the New Testament. Throughout the book of Acts, Paul traveled on missionary journeys, sharing the Gospel and helping to gather groups of new believers into the first churches. Toward the end of the book, Paul spent a lot of time defending the Gospel and the work of Christ in his own life in various settings and before an array of civil leaders.



TELL THE STORY - Acts 27-28:1-16

Last week, we learned that Paul continued to share the gospel while he was in prison in Caesarea. Paul shared Jesus with Felix and his wife, Festus, King Agrippa, and Queen Bernice while he waited in prison for over two years. Paul told Festus he wanted to go to Rome and have his case brought to Caesar, the leader of the Roman Empire. Paul hadn't done anything wrong, but God used his imprisonment to get him to Rome. God had told Paul that He would send Paul to Rome to share Jesus with the people there. Today, we will hear an amazing story of how God protected Paul and some other men as they traveled by ship to Rome and encountered a terrible storm.

One day, Paul was put on a ship with other prisoners and soldiers going to Rome. The journey was difficult. As they sailed, strong winds and rain tossed the ship. The ship was blown off course. No matter how hard they tried to steer the ship in the right direction, the wind was too strong. For many days, they battled the storm. The sailors threw things overboard to make the ship lighter. They were afraid the ship would break into pieces, and they would drown in the deep sea.

One night, God sent an angel to Paul. The angel told Paul not to be afraid. God would save the lives of everyone on the ship. Paul told everyone on board what God had said. "Take courage," he said. Paul believed everything would happen just like God said. The people on the ship would not die. They would have to run the boat onto an island.

The ship got close to an island, and some of the sailors tried to escape in a lifeboat. Paul told them to stay on the boat if they wanted to be safe. The sailors listened to Paul. In the morning, Paul told everyone it was time to eat. They hadn't eaten in about two weeks and were very hungry. He thanked God and broke the bread, and everyone ate. Then they sailed closer to the island.

When the ship got close to the island of Malta, the sailors raised the sails and headed toward the island. As the ship got close, it struck a sandbar and stopped. The waves crashed into the ship, and it began to break into pieces. An army officer ordered everyone to swim for shore. Those who could not swim clung to the planks and pieces of the ship. They all made it safely to shore. Paul was right; God saved all of their lives.



RETELL THE STORY

Have students re-tell the story as best they can.



SHARE THE GOSPEL

Paul trusted God to keep His promise to rescue him from the storm. He encouraged the sailors to trust and obey God, too. God calls us to trust in His Son, Jesus, who died to rescue us from sin and death, and to invite others to believe this good news as well. When we trust in Jesus, we have an unsinkable faith, knowing that what God promises is true and will always be fulfilled.

QUESTIONS TO REBUILD THE STORY

1. What did Jesus tell Paul in Jerusalem about his future? (*Acts 23:11*)
2. How many soldiers escorted Paul safely out of Jerusalem to Caesarea? (*Acts 23:23-24*)
3. Who was the governor who kept Paul in prison for two years, hoping for a bribe? (*Acts 24:26-27*)
4. When Paul stood before Governor Festus, what bold appeal did he make? (*Acts 25:10-12*)
5. Who was the king to whom Paul spoke about Jesus in Caesarea? (*Acts 26:1-3, 26-29*)
6. Who was the centurion in charge of taking Paul to Rome? (*Acts 27:1*)
7. What warning did Paul give before the ship left Crete? (*Acts 27:9-10*)
8. During the storm, what message did the angel of God give Paul? (*Acts 27:23-24*)
9. How many people were saved when the shipwrecked near Malta? (*Acts 27:37, 44*)
10. What happened to Paul when a viper bit him on the island of Malta, and how did the people respond? (*Acts 28:3-6*)
11. Paul trusted God's promise even in storms and prison (*Acts 27:23-25*). How can you trust God when life feels scary or out of control?
12. Paul shared about Jesus with everyone — from guards to kings (*Acts 26:22-23*). Who is someone you could share Jesus with this week?

13. Paul never gave up, even when things were hard (Acts 28:30-31). What's one way you can continue to follow Jesus when life gets tough?
14. The ship Paul sailed on faced terrible storms. The men traveling with Paul were scared that they would die on their journey. Why was Paul able to tell the men that no one would be killed in the storm? (Acts 27:23-24). An angel of God told Paul that no one on the ship would be killed in the storm. Paul believed God would keep this promise and encouraged the other men to do the same.
15. How did Paul encourage others? (Acts 27:35-36). Even during the difficult journey, Paul gave thanks to the Lord and ate, trusting that God would keep His promise. Paul didn't become hopeless or lose heart. Paul's trust in God showed others that God can always be trusted. The Bible says that Paul's words and behavior encouraged the others on the ship.
16. How can we trust that God has a plan even when things look bad? God has given us His Word so we can trust Him and believe His promises. God is in control of everything — including storms and people's evil plans. Leaders, share with the kids a time when you trusted God when it was hard. Invite kids to share ways they have trusted in God when things are hard.
17. How can our trust in God help encourage others? God designed believers to live in community with one another to encourage one another as we seek to follow and obey God. Seeing others' faith lived out pushes us on to trust in God.
18. How does God receive glory when we trust in Him? The Bible tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God. When we have faith in who God is, what He has said, and what He will do, we demonstrate that God is supreme over everything. Trusting in God also shows we are dependent on Him and willing to rely on His power.
19. How can you encourage others to trust in God when they might be afraid?
20. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?

21. What does the story teach me about myself?
22. Are there any commands in this story that we should obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
23. Are there any promises in this story that are worth remembering? How do they help me trust and love God?
24. How does this story help me live on mission?
25. Are there any promises in this story that we need to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
26. How does this story help me live on mission?

PRAYER PROMPTS

Thank You, God, that You always keep Your promises. Thank You for the way You care for us and for sending Your Son to rescue us from our sins. Please help us share this good news with others. Amen.

REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. - Romans 1:16a

- 16 F l a n a o t g, f i i t p o G f s t e w b, - use this first letter memorization tool that aids in remembering text by using the first letter of each word as a cue.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ATTENTIVE - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

COMPASSIONATE - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

CREATOR - God made everything. He is uncreated.

DELIVERER - God rescues and saves his children.

ETERNAL - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

FAITHFUL - God always keeps his promises.

GENEROUS - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

GLORIOUS - God displays His greatness and worth.

GOOD - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

HOLY - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

INFINITE - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

JEALOUS - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

JUST - God is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

LOVING - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

MERCIFUL - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.

OMNIPRESENT - God is fully present everywhere.

OMNISCIENT - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING - God is untiring and bears with His children.

PROVIDER - God meets the needs of his children.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

REFUGE - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

RIGHTEOUS - God is always good and right.

SELF-EXISTENT - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

SELF-SUFFICIENT - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

SOVEREIGN - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

TRANSCENDENT - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

TRUTHFUL - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

WISE - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

WORTHY - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

WRATHFUL - God hates all unrighteousness.



Application Questions

LOOK UPWARD



- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?
- What aspect of His character is He inviting you to experience and enjoy?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your relationship with God?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in your relationship with God?

LOOK INWARD



- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself, your needs, or your goals in life?
- In what aspects of your personal life is God inviting you to grow and mature?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story inwardly?
- How will those around you benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to allow these truths to help you grow spiritually?

LOOK AROUND



- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is god inviting you to do differently in your relationships?



Application Questions

LOOK OUTWARD ➡

- How does this story apply to your ministry and mission in life- to your role in God's kingdom, in society, and the world?
- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your ministry?
- How will the world benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

LOOK FORWARD ➡➡

- How does this story apply to your future, both in this age and in eternity?
- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What aspects of eternity is God inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit in the future by applying these truths now?
- How will God's kingdom benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?