



PAUL'S LIFE AND MINISTRY

Date: 08.10.25 | Paul Checks in With Various Churches
Scripture: Acts 18:18-23; 20:1-16

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.



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INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Label different walls or corners of your classroom with the names Antioch, Ephesus, Troas, Corinth, and Jerusalem. Have the kids stand in the middle of the room. Play a game of 5 Corners. Close your eyes and have all of the kids choose a place to stand. With your eyes still closed, choose one of the places on the wall. All of the kids at that place are out and will sit down until one winner is left. Play several rounds, allowing different kids to choose.

As you tell today's story, have the kids move around the room in fun ways (hop, roll, walk backwards, etc.) to each of the places you're teaching about. These locations are in **BOLD** font in the summary below.



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BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Paul's third missionary journey is recorded in [Acts 18:23–21:17](#) and took place around AD 52–57. After his time in Corinth at the end of his second missionary journey, Paul sailed with Priscilla and Aquila to his sponsoring church in Antioch. On the way, at Cenchreae—about 6.5 miles east of Corinth—Paul cut his hair, which likely indicated the completion of a vow. This act symbolized his ongoing dedication to God and Israel, even as he preached in predominantly Gentile regions ([Numbers 6:1–21](#); [Acts 21:20–24](#)). The vow, likely a Nazirite vow, involved letting one's hair grow, maintaining purity, abstaining from strong drink, and avoiding contact with anything dead. Such vows were often made to seek divine blessing or express thanksgiving. For Paul, this could have been a way of thanking God for the spiritual victories in Corinth. Though now a follower of Christ, Paul did not see this practice as contradictory to his faith, and he never abandoned his Jewish cultural and religious identity ([Acts 28:17](#)).

On his way to Jerusalem, Paul made a brief stop in Ephesus. After reasoning in the synagogue, he declined to stay but left Priscilla and Aquila behind to continue the ministry ([Acts 18:19](#)). He promised to return, saying, “if God wills.” This shows Paul's attitude of submitting his plans to God's will ([1 Corinthians 4:19](#); [James 4:15](#)). Though his visit was short, it prepared the way for his future work there ([Acts 19](#)). His promise to return set the stage for Ephesus becoming a primary focus of this third missionary journey. Without much detail, [Acts 18:23](#) marks the beginning of the journey—a trip of more than 1,500 miles over about four years. Paul traveled through the regions of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening believers he had previously discipled on his first journey. Meanwhile, God used Apollos to begin ministering in Ephesus, preparing hearts for Paul's eventual arrival.

Leaving from Caesarea in the spring of AD 51, Paul went up and greeted the church, likely in Jerusalem, which could be referred to as “the church” without further detail ([Acts 8:40](#); [9:30](#); [21:8](#)). He then went down to Antioch ([Acts 13:1–3](#); [14:26–28](#); [15:30–35](#)). After spending some time there, he set out again, traveling from place to place and strengthening all the disciples ([Acts 18:23](#)).

In [Acts 19](#), Paul arrived in Ephesus and remained there for about three years. At the end of this ministry, he called the disciples together, encouraged them, and departed for Macedonia. Instead of sailing from Cenchreae to Syria, Paul returned through Macedonia and sailed from Philippi to Troas. Along the way, he visited and encouraged the churches, including those in Macedonia and Greece ([Acts 20:2](#)). He spent three months in Greece,



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most likely in Corinth, where he wrote the letter to the Romans. A plot against his life forced him to alter his travel plans and return to Syria by land through Macedonia.

During this journey, Paul was collecting money from Gentile churches to support impoverished Jewish believers in Jerusalem (*Romans 15:25–33; 1 Corinthians 16:1–4; 2 Corinthians 8–9*). He hoped this gift would meet their needs and also promote unity in the body of Christ. Representatives from the contributing churches accompanied Paul, both for safety and accountability, ensuring the funds were handled with integrity (*Acts 20:4; 1 Corinthians 16:1–4; Romans 15:25–28, 31; Acts 24:17*). These men represented the various churches Paul had ministered to and demonstrated the unity of the global church.

Paul traveled by land to Philippi, where Luke joined him, and together they sailed to Troas. There they observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread and stayed for seven days (*Acts 20:7–16*). In Troas, a humorous yet miraculous event occurred. The believers likely met in the evening, as they had worked during the day. As Paul preached late into the night in the upper room of a house lit by many lamps, a young man named Eutychus fell asleep and fell from a third-story window (*v.9*). His name means “lucky,” and though he died from the fall, Paul embraced him, and his life was restored (*v.10*). Paul extended his time with the believers until daybreak, encouraging the church. They took the boy home alive and were greatly comforted (*v.12*).

Afterward, Paul’s companions boarded a ship for Assos, while Paul traveled by land and joined them there. They sailed to Mitylene, then to Chios and Samos, with each leg of the journey taking about a day. Paul’s ship did not stop at Ephesus because he wanted to reach Jerusalem by the Feast of Pentecost (*Acts 20:13–16*). Having spent three years in Ephesus, Paul knew that a stop there would delay him with prolonged farewells, so he called for the Ephesian elders to meet him elsewhere and gave a farewell address, reflecting on the trials and blessings of ministry.

Paul was a church planter with the heart of a pastor. He desired not only to see people come to faith in Christ but also to nurture them into biblically grounded, devoted disciples. For this mission, Paul was willing to sacrifice personal comfort and face great danger, all for the sake of teaching God’s Word and strengthening the church.



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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.



TELL THE STORY - Acts 18:18-23; 20:1-16

Paul's third journey happened around AD 52–57. After his time in Corinth, Paul traveled with his friends Priscilla and Aquila. On the way, he stopped in a town called Cenchreae and cut his hair. This showed he had finished a special promise to God, called a vow, which reminded people of their dedication to God.

Paul continued to his home church in Antioch, and after spending some time there, he set out again to visit and encourage the churches he had started before. He traveled through places like Galatia and Phrygia, helping believers grow stronger in their faith.

Paul made a quick stop in Ephesus, where he spoke in the synagogue and promised to return if it was God's will. He left Priscilla and Aquila there to continue teaching. Later, a man named Apollos also began helping the believers in Ephesus, getting things ready for Paul's longer visit.

Eventually, Paul did return to Ephesus and stayed there for about three years. Many people believed in Jesus, and the church grew strong. After encouraging the believers, Paul left and traveled through Macedonia and Greece, visiting churches and encouraging them too. While in Greece, likely in Corinth, he wrote the book of Romans.

During this journey, Paul also gathered money from Gentile churches to help poor Jewish believers in Jerusalem. This was a way to show love and unity in the church. He traveled with a group of men from different churches to ensure the money was handled correctly.

Paul continued traveling by land and sea, visiting places like Philippi, Troas, and several small islands. In Troas, something amazing happened! Paul preached late into the night, and a young man named Eutychus fell asleep and fell out of a window. He died, but Paul prayed and brought him back to life! The believers were so thankful and encouraged.



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Paul didn't stop in Ephesus again because he was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem by the Feast of Pentecost. Instead, he asked the church leaders from Ephesus to meet him in another city. There, he gave them a goodbye message, reminding them of how he had taught them faithfully and warning them to keep following Jesus.

Paul was not just a traveler—he was a man who loved Jesus and wanted others to grow in their faith. He worked hard, even when it was difficult because he cared deeply about helping people know and follow Jesus.



RETELL THE STORY



SHARE THE GOSPEL

This lesson from Paul's third missionary journey highlights the heart of the gospel—that salvation through Jesus Christ transforms lives and unites people across cultures. Everywhere Paul went, he shared the message that Jesus is the promised Savior, and he worked tirelessly to strengthen believers in their faith. Even as he honored his Jewish heritage, Paul made it clear that righteousness doesn't come through religious customs but through faith in Christ alone ([Romans 1:16–17](#)). His actions showed that the gospel is not just about believing a message but living it out by encouraging others, giving generously, and building unity in the body of Christ. Whether preaching in synagogues, writing letters, raising money for the poor, or comforting a grieving church after a miracle, Paul's life pointed to the power of the gospel to change hearts and create a worldwide family of believers.



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QUESTIONS TO REBUILD THE STORY

Who traveled with Paul when he left Corinth, and where did they go? [Acts 18:18](#)

What important act did Paul do at Cenchreae, and what might it have meant? [Acts 18:18](#)

When Paul stopped in Ephesus, what did he do in the synagogue? [Acts 18:19](#)

Did Paul stay in Ephesus long at that time? What promise did he make before leaving?
[Acts 18:20–21](#)

Where did Paul travel after leaving Ephesus? Which church did he visit and encourage?
[Acts 18:22](#)

What did Paul do as he began his third missionary journey? [Acts 18:23](#)

After the uproar in Ephesus, where did Paul go, and what did he do? [Acts 20:1–2](#)

Where did Paul stay for three months, and what caused him to change his travel plans?
[Acts 20:3](#)

Who were some of the men traveling with Paul, and what did they represent? [Acts 20:4](#)

What feast did Paul and his companions observe in Philippi before sailing to Troas? [Acts 20:6](#)



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How long did Paul stay in Troas, and what happened while he was teaching late at night?
Acts 20:7–9

What happened to Eutychus, and how did Paul respond? *Acts 20:10*

How did the church respond after Eutychus was brought back to life? *Acts 20:11–12*

After Troas, how did Paul travel to his next stops, and why was he avoiding Ephesus?
Acts 20:13–16

What was Paul's goal for reaching Jerusalem? *Acts 20:16*

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 any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?

How does this story help me live on mission?



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PRAYER PROMPTS

Thank You, God, for sharing Your love with others through Paul and his missionary journeys. Thank You for working in our lives as we share Your love with those around us. Help us to encourage others in their faith and continue to teach us about what it means to be a follower of Christ.

IF TIME ALLOWS:

Practice naming the 4 Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Remind the kids that these books are in the NT and tell of Jesus' time on earth. Practice finding these books in the Bible.

Practice naming some of the disciples. During Wednesday night Bible study childcare, the kids learned a hokey song to remember all of the disciples. Play it a couple of times with your group and have them try to sing along.

You can find the song [here](#).

MISSIONS EMPHASIS:

For July and August, our Creek Kids will be collecting money in the funnel for Sleep in Heavenly Peace. We will have a family mission opportunity in August, where our families can both register and attend a bed build with Sleep in Heavenly Peace. Additionally, they can shop and purchase needed items from a wishlist for this organization. More information about this special project will come soon.

REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

Continue to use the Memory Verse Handout for fun ideas for practicing the memory verse for this unit.

[Check out this Seeds Kids song](#), Not Ashamed: Romans 1:16-17 to help memorize this verse.



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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.



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ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

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.

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.



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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?



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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 in 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?