

“These people are servants of the Most High God! They are proclaiming a way of salvation to you!” (Acts 16:17b)

Paul Escapes with Help – Acts 9:21-25

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: PROCLAIM

In last week’s lesson, we heard the story of Paul’s conversion. When God appeared to Ananias to send him to Paul, God told Ananias that he had chosen Paul to bring God’s name to the Gentiles and Israelites. Following his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, Paul essentially spent the rest of his life fulfilling the mission for which God had chosen him, sharing the good news with everyone he met. The last half of the Book of Acts tells of Paul’s travels.

Even though Paul had been chosen by God to share the good news about Jesus, his path was not always a smooth one. In today’s Bible story we hear about a time that Paul’s life was in danger because he had been preaching that Jesus is God’s son. This story reads like an adventure tale, with Paul escaping down the wall in the middle of the night. And this turns out not to be the last time Paul’s life would be in danger for spreading the gospel. While there seemed to be many people out to get Paul, he inevitably escaped with the help of others.

It is easy for us today to feel far removed from Paul’s mission. Few of us are called to travel to foreign lands and spread the good news that Jesus is the Messiah. However, it is worthwhile to note that as Paul traveled, he shared the good news with everyone he met. We can follow Paul’s example and share the good news with persons we meet, wherever life might take us. Each week as you teach your children about God, you are letting them know that they are children of God. You are following Paul’s example and spreading the good news.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

This month’s unit is about proclaiming the good news of God’s love. One way to do this is through advocating. Advocacy is standing up for others who may not have the power or ability to stand up for themselves. How can you advocate for the kids in your class this week?

Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, white cloth, battery-operated candle, basket*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a white cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21). Place a basket inside of the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster, and invite the children to wonder about what the word *proclaim* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are hearing stories about a man named Paul. In today's story, Paul gets help from some friends.

ASK: Can you share about a time when friends helped you?

- We recommend reading a story each week from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary kid to read, "Paul Escapes with Help" (pp. 280–1), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for friends who help us in times of need. Amen.

Paul Escapes with Help – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Paul Escapes with Help" (Reproducible 10A) for each preschooler.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture. Invite elementary kids to help the preschoolers follow the directions on the pages.

SAY: Paul wanted to help spread Jesus' message of love, but people still didn't trust him. Paul had to get help from some friends to escape a dangerous situation!

ASK: Who do you ask for help?

Missing Vowels – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons, colored pencils, kids' scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Missing Vowels" (Reproducible 10B) for each child.*

SAY: Paul spent his whole ministry sharing the message of Jesus' life and love. We can do that too! Solve the puzzle to find out what that is called.

- Invite the kids to solve the puzzle by adding the missing vowels.
- Help the kids read the words on their papers.

Paul Escapes Anagram – Older Elementary

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils, CEB Bible

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Paul Escapes Anagram" (Reproducible 10C) for each child.

SAY: In today's story, Paul proclaims Jesus' message of love, but some people still don't trust him. He has to get some help from his friends to stay safe.

- Invite the kids to use the letters from the words "proclaim" and "friends" to make new words.

Find Your Match – All Ages

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, scissors, tape

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Find Your Match" (Reproducible 10E). Each child will need one animal card from this page, so make enough copies to insure that every child gets an animal card. Cut the cards out.

SAY: We all need help from friends some times. Look for your matching animal friend in this game.

- Give each child an animal card.
- When you say go, invite the children to find all of their classmates who have the same animal
- When they all find each other, they must shout, "Friends help at all times!"
- Play several rounds until everyone is ready to move on.

Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy today's Take-Home Pages from the Reproducible Kids' Book, 10F–10G. Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16).

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story, one section at a time.

WONDER: Why do you think we have this story in our Bibles? What is God trying to teach us?

Share a Story

Supplies: Celebrate Wonder DVD, TV, DVD player

- Invite the children to join you, and to sit in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 10 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors

Prepare Ahead: Lay out the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18). Cut out the Unit 3 story figures (Class Pack—p. 3).

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat.

SAY: Today's Faith Word is *proclaim*.

- Show the children the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21).

SAY: Proclaim means to share out loud what you believe about your faith.

- Point to the portrait of Paul.

WONDER together:

- What does it take to be a good friend?
- What would have been another way to end the conflict Paul had?
- How will your words proclaim God's love?
- Add the portrait of the friends to the poster.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the basket.

WONDER: Why do you think there is a basket in our Wonder Box this week?

Experience Wonder

Weaving (Art)

Supplies: construction paper in a variety of colors, glue, scissors

Prepare Ahead: Cut construction paper into 1-inch-wide strips. Each child will need 20 strips, so cut plenty.

SAY: In Bible times, baskets were really important! Artisans would weave baskets. We're going to weave paper to help us remember this story.

- Invite the kids to choose 10 strips in two different colors. Each child will have a total of 20 strips.
- Invite the children to lay one color of their strips vertically across their workspace. It will look like this: |||||
- Have the children weave the first other color strip through the strips lying down on their workspaces. They will go over, under, over, under, over, under, over, under, over, and under.
- Encourage them to glue the ends of the woven strip to the last pieces of the lying down color.
- Invite the children to weave the second other color strip through the strips lying down on their workspaces. They will go under, over, under, over, under, over, under, over, under, and over.
- Again, encourage them to glue the ends of the woven strip to the last pieces of the lying down color.
- They will repeat these steps until all ten strips have been woven through.

WONDER: What is your favorite part of today's story?

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 3 Bible verse is Acts 16:17b. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Acts in the Old or New Testament? (*New*) Where is Acts located in the New Testament? (*right after the Gospel books*) In what chapter of Acts is our verse located? (*16*) What is the verse number? (*17*)

- Gather the kids around the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster. Read it together.

ASK: What is the reference for our verse? (*Acts 16:17*)

SAY: Our Bible verse is from one of the stories we will hear this month. Paul and Silas heal a woman and this is what she says!

Peaceful Place

Supplies: copies of the Unit 3 Faith Word (Leader Guide—p. 115); Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook; suggested book: *Love Monster*, by Rachel Bright; paper; crayons or markers; yarn; pony beads

Tip: All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Encourage the children to color the Unit 3 Faith Word coloring page.
- Invite the children to make friendship bracelets with the yarn and pony beads.

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Proclamation Through Preaching

SAY: A spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to and spend time with God. It doesn't have to be the same thing every time, but it can be. A spiritual practice can be praying silently or out loud, dancing, singing, walking, breathing, drawing, chanting, or speaking blessings.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice and invite them to repeat after you:
 - LEADER SAYS: My voice is important.
 - CLASS SAYS: My voice is important.
 - LEADER SAYS: My voice matters.
 - CLASS SAYS: My voice matters.
 - LEADER SAYS: Thank you, God, for my voice.
 - CLASS SAYS: Thank you, God, for my voice.

PRAY: Dear God, help us proclaim your love in all we say and do. Amen.

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child on the hand as you say this blessing: "You are important. You matter."

Family Spiritual Practice

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages for today (*Reproducibles 10F–10G*). Ask your family to participate in this week's spiritual practice and reach out to a family friend this week.

Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Memory

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, kids' scissors, crayons

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Find Your Match" (Reproducible 10 E) for each child. Cut each set of cards a part for each child.

SAY: Paul's friends helped him.

ASK: What do you like to do with your friends?

SAY: We're going to play a game with our friends.

- Invite the kids to color their set of cards.
- Divide the group into pairs.
- Using one set of cards, invite the children to play a game of memory by following the instructions below.
 - Lay the deck of cards facing up in rows of five.
 - Turn all of the cards facedown.
 - One at a time, turn two cards over. If you get a match, you get to keep the two cards you turned over. If you don't, turn the cards facedown.
 - Keep playing until all of the cards have been matched.
- Invite the kids to take their memory cards home to play as a family.

Early Elementary – Mirroring Game

Supplies: none

SAY: In our Bible story, Paul got help from his friends. They worked together to lower Paul down the city wall in a basket. We're going to work together to mirror each other's movements.

- Divide the group into pairs. Each pair will have Person A and Person B.
- Person A will move first and Person B will try to be their mirror.
- After Person A has been the leader for a few minutes, switch, so Person B gets to be the leader.

Older Elementary – Basket Relay

Supplies: two big boxes, two chairs

Prepare Ahead: Cut the bottom off of the two boxes so the children can put the boxes over their bodies. Set a chair out for each relay team to mark where the teams should walk quickly to and turn around.

SAY: In our Bible story, Paul’s friends lowered him in a basket to keep him safe. They did it as quickly as they could, while still being sneaky. We’re going to do a quick and sneaky basket relay!

- Divide the group into two teams. Give each team a box.
- Instruct the first person on each team to put the box over themselves. They will need to hold it up around themselves to move quickly.
- The first person will need to move quickly yet sneaky all the way to the chair and back. They will then hand the box to the next person in their line.
- The next person will do the same.
- Continue the relay race until everyone has finished.
- Play again after mixing up the teams.

Intergenerational Activity – What Makes a Good Friend?

Note: Each week we will feature a special intergenerational activity. Plan to invite youth and adults to join you for these activities.

Supplies: Reproducible Kids’ Book, markers or crayons

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy “What Makes a Good Friend?” (Reproducible 10D) for each person.

SAY: Today we heard about Paul and his friends who helped him escape danger. They were some good friends! Friends help us have fun, grow into whom God created us to be, and support us when things get hard.

ASK: What else makes a good friend?

ASK: Is there someone in your life whom you call a good friend?

- Invite group to draw or write about the person (or people) in their lives whom they consider good friends onto their papers.