

The Plan to Stop Paul

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BIBLE PASSAGE: Acts 23

MAIN POINT: God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: Philippians 1:21

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: When should we tell others about Jesus? We should tell about Jesus all the time.

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EXPERIENCE THE STORY
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Leader BIBLE STUDY

As Paul's third missionary journey came to an end, a prophet named Agabus warned him that the Jews would seize him in Jerusalem and hand him over to the Gentiles. (See Acts 21:10–11.)

But Paul did not hesitate. He returned to Jerusalem and was seized by a group of Jews who wanted to kill him because he taught things contrary to their law.

The Roman soldiers nearby saw the commotion and stepped in, taking Paul into Roman custody. Now Paul was in Gentile hands. Paul remained under Roman protection and was staying in the barracks when the Lord gave him a

message: “Have courage! For as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so it is necessary for you to testify in Rome” (Acts 23:11).

Check out the video “The Big Story” for a picture of this quarter’s part in God’s big story of redemption.

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What a comforting message for Paul! The sovereign Lord told Paul his future: You’re going to Rome. Paul wasn’t exactly sure how he was going to get to Rome, but he could trust that God was working all things together for that purpose.

The next morning, Paul’s nephew uncovered a plot to kill Paul and reported it to the Roman army commander. The commander arranged for Paul to go to Caesarea, where he would be safe.

In this Bible story, we see God using human means to bring about His end. Even when others threatened his life, Paul trusted that God is faithful. He believed that God, who showed His love for the world by sending Jesus to die on the cross and rise again, would help him through hard times.

We too can risk everything to share the gospel with courage because we know that God loves us and will care for us. God calls us to be obedient and faithful as we take part in His greater plan to show His glory to us and through us for the fame of His name.



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The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

The Plan to Stop Paul

Acts 23

• Use story stones:

Gather river rocks. With a permanent marker, draw simple images to represent people and events in the Bible story. (Paul, group of angry Jews, army commander, Jewish leaders, Paul's nephew, soldiers, horse) Place stones in a basket. Show the Paul stone and begin to tell the story, showing stones as you tell it.

• Make it a

monologue: Enlist a leader to dress in Bible times clothing and tell the Bible story as a monologue from the perspective of Paul's nephew.

Paul was in Jerusalem. The believers there were happy to see Paul, but some of the Jews were not happy. **One day, when Paul went to the temple, a crowd of Jews** grabbed Paul and dragged him outside. They **wanted to hurt him, but the commander of the Roman army stopped them.**

The army commander arrested Paul and took him to a group of leaders whose job was to decide if someone had broken the law and to decide how lawbreakers should be punished.

Paul stood in front of the leaders and said, "Friends, I did what God wants me to do. I did not do anything wrong." **Paul told them he was in jail for teaching that Jesus rose from the dead.** Then the leaders began arguing. Some of them thought Paul was doing the right thing, but some thought he was wrong. **The Roman soldiers took Paul away so he would be safe.**

The next night, the Lord came to Paul. "Have courage!" said the Lord. "You told people about Me in Jerusalem. You must tell people in Rome too."

But the next morning, a group of Jews made another plan to hurt Paul. They told the Jewish leaders about their plan. "Ask the army commander to bring Paul to you," the group said. "Pretend you need to ask him some questions. Then, when he is almost here, we will get him!"

Paul's nephew heard the Jews talking about their plan. He hurried to Paul and told him what they said. Paul told him to tell the army commander about the plan.

So the army commander told two of his soldiers to get

a bunch of soldiers and horses. The soldiers brought a horse for Paul to ride. That night, the soldiers took Paul to another city to see the Roman governor. God took care of Paul and protected him from the men who wanted to get him.

Christ Connection: Even when others wanted to hurt Paul, Paul trusted God. God showed His love for the world by sending Jesus, and Paul believed God would help him through hard times. Like Paul, we can obey God no matter what because we know God loves us and takes care of us.



**WANT TO
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MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover how God's Word can help them grow in the gospel. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Introduce THE STORY

SESSION TITLE: The Plan to Stop Paul

BIBLE PASSAGE: Acts 23

MAIN POINT: God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: Philippians 1:21

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: When should we tell others about Jesus? We should tell about Jesus all the time.

Welcome time

- “Don’t Stop” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church’s security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- “I Need Protection” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Invite preschoolers to draw a line connecting each person with the protective item he or she needs.

SAY • All these items protect people from different things. The knee pads, elbow pads, and helmet protect the skateboarder’s body from getting hurt. The oven mitts protect the man’s hands from the heat of the oven. The goggles protect the girl’s eyes from the liquid. In today’s Bible story, Paul needed protection and God provided it. Listen to hear how God protected Paul.

Protect Paul

Choose an object such as a toy person figure to represent *Paul*. Lead preschoolers to sit in a circle on the floor. Choose a child to sit in the middle of the circle with her



- object to represent Paul

eyes closed. Discreetly give *Paul* to a child in the circle and direct him to hide the object from view. Instruct the preschooler in the middle to open her eyes and guess who is keeping *Paul* safe. Once the child protecting *Paul* has been revealed, choose another child to be in the middle and play again.

SAY • We will hear in today's Bible story how Roman soldiers kept Paul safe, but we know it was really God using those Roman soldiers to protect Paul. Listen to find out how God used the soldiers in His plan.

Create a sun visor

Cut a paper plate into a half-moon shape for each preschooler. Punch a hole each corner. Tie elastic through one hole, and measure a child's head before tying the elastic to the other hole to create a visor. Encourage a child to personalize her visor with crayons and stickers.

- paper plates
- hole punch
- elastic
- stickers
- crayons or markers

SAY • When you are outdoors in the sun, your eyes may need protection from the bright sunlight. When you wear a visor, it will protect your eyes. Some people became angry when Paul told people about Jesus; they tried to hurt him. Paul needed protection from the people. **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.**

Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite children to make different farm animal noises as they move to group time.

- countdown video (optional)

Teach THE STORY

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Introduce the Bible story

- various items that offer protection

Welcome children to the group. Show items that are used to protect us (hand sanitizer, bike helmet, sunscreen, sunglasses, flotation device, picture of fire alarm). Discuss potential dangers and how each item offers protection.

SAY • These items can help to keep us from danger. Paul was in danger because he kept on preaching about Jesus. But **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.** Let's hear about it in our Bible story.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- "The Plan to Stop Paul" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Place a bookmark at Acts 23 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • This Bible is a very special book. It tells us everything God wants us to know. Today's Bible story comes from the Book of Acts in the New Testament.

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

SAY • **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.** Paul trusted God; he knew God wanted

people to know that He loved the world so much that He sent His Son, Jesus.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. Why were some of the Jews not happy with Paul?
(*They didn't want Paul to preach about Jesus.*)
2. When the crowd wanted to hurt Paul, who arrested Paul to protect him? (*commander of the Roman army*)
3. What did the Lord tell Paul in a dream? (*"Have courage!" Paul would tell people about Jesus in Rome.*)
4. When the Jews came up with a new plan to hurt Paul, who warned him? (*Paul's nephew*)
5. How did the soldiers get Paul out of the city? (*on a horse*)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Paul knew how important it was to tell everyone about Jesus. Our big picture question is, ***When should we tell others about Jesus? We should tell about Jesus all the time.*** Like Paul, we can tell others about Jesus no matter what and no matter when because we know God loves us and takes care of us.

• Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Philippians 1:21. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, "To Live Is Christ."

• Key Passage Poster
• "To Live Is Christ" song

SAY • Paul knew the angry people could have killed him. Paul was not afraid to die. He knew he would be with Jesus, which was even better.

Transition to experience the story

Experience THE STORY

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LOW PREP

• walking rope (optional)

Go on a listening expedition

Lead preschoolers on a walk through the church building. Explain to preschoolers that they are on a listening expedition. They must be very, very quiet and listen closely to the things they hear. Tell them to be prepared to tell what they heard when you all return to the room. Allow preschoolers to take turns sharing what they heard.

SAY • Paul's nephew heard the Jews talking about their plan to hurt Paul. He told the army commander and the commander made a plan to keep Paul safe. God used Paul's nephew and the army commander to protect Paul. **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.**



LOW PREP

- Bible
- bookmark
- "Don't Stop" song (optional)
- "To Live Is Christ" song (optional)

Pass a Bible

Place a bookmark in a Bible at Acts 23. Gather preschoolers and sit in a circle. Play music. Begin to pass the Bible around the circle. Periodically pause the song. Guide a child to look at the Bible each time the music stops. Help her locate a *P* in the word *Paul*, comment that Acts is in the New Testament part of the Bible, or point to chapter 23. Start the music and play again as time allows.

SAY • The Bible tells us that God showed His love for

the world by sending Jesus. Paul trusted God and believed God would help him through hard times. God did help Paul. **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.** Like Paul, we can trust God and tell others about Him no matter what because we know God loves us and takes care of us.

Make play dough

Assist a child as she measures ingredients into a cold electric skillet. Add food color and mix thoroughly before heating. Turn on the electric skillet. Use an oven mitt as you stir the dough. Cook on medium heat until thick. Cool completely before allowing children to play with the dough. Provide ziplock bags for preschoolers to take home some of the dough.

SAY • The dough is hot; we need to let it cool before we play with it. I'm glad I wore mitts to stay safe from the heat when the mixture was cooking. It's good to be protected from danger. Paul was in danger, but **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.** God showed He loves us when He sent Jesus to rescue us from sin. We can trust Him to protect us too.

- Allergy Alert download
- electric skillet (adult use only)
- food color
- 1 cup flour
- ½ cup salt
- 1 cup water
- 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 tsp. cream of tartar
- measuring cups and spoons
- ziplock bags

Tip: Keep preschoolers at a distance from the electric skillet to prevent burns.

Toss an animal cube

Print, cut out, and assemble the “Animal Movement Cube.” Invite a child to toss the cube. The child will lead the group to move like the animal shown faceup on the cube. Mention today's Bible story each time a horse is selected and direct preschooler's attention to the Bible story picture poster.

SAY • The army commander sent soldiers to move Paul

- “Animal Movement Cube” printable
- scissors (adult use)
- tape
- Bible Story Picture Poster

on horseback to another city late at night. **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.** Even when others wanted to hurt Paul, Paul trusted God. God showed His love for the world by sending Jesus, and Paul believed God would help him through hard times. Like Paul, we can obey God no matter what because we know God loves us and takes care of us.

Build barracks

- tape
- interlocking blocks

Tape connecting rectangles on the floor. Show how to connect the interlocking blocks to build walls along the taped guide. Challenge a child to sort colors as she builds or to include a door or window in a section of the barracks. Mention that soldiers often live together in barracks so they can be ready to protect people.

SAY • *Barracks* are the buildings where soldiers live and work together. The soldiers in today's story helped Paul when a group of people wanted to hurt him. The soldiers brought Paul into their barracks. Even when others wanted to hurt Paul, Paul trusted God. **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.**

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve animal crackers for snack. Ask children to look for crackers that resemble horses. Talk about how the soldiers brought a horse for Paul to ride to get to a safe place in another city. Talk about how **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.**

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Transition

When a child finishes his snack, guide him to throw away any trash. He may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of someone they can tell about Jesus. Remind preschoolers of the big picture question and answer. ***When should we tell others about Jesus? We should tell about Jesus all the time.*** Pray for the children.

SAY • God, thank You for protecting Paul so he could keep on telling people about how much You love them. Remind us of how You love us and care for us. Make us bold to tell others about how You love them and sent Your Son, Jesus, to rescue them from sin. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers