

The Shipwreck

BIBLE PASSAGE: Acts 27:13-44; 28:11-16

MAIN POINT: God protected Paul in the shipwreck so he could stand before Caesar.

KEY PASSAGE: Philippians 1:20-21

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: When should we tell others about Jesus? We should always tell others about Jesus even when it is difficult.

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

Paul was in Roman custody because of unfounded accusations brought against him by the Jews. Paul had stood before rulers in Caesarea and invoked his right as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar. So Festus the governor arranged for Paul to go to Rome.

Paul got onto a ship going toward Rome. As if Paul's journey to Rome had not already been delayed and complicated enough, the ship was caught up in a terrible storm. Paul had warned the crew not to sail from Crete because they would lose everything and die. But they didn't listen. Paul pointed out the error of their ways, but he still gave them hope. An angel had appeared to Paul. He said

Paul would make it to Rome and all of the people with him would survive.

Paul urged everyone on the ship to eat so they would have energy. They planned to run the ship ashore on an island, but the ship got stuck on a sandbar. The waves battered the ship and it broke into pieces; however, all of the people survived and made it safely to shore.

Paul suffered for Christ. In his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul listed the kinds of things he faced: beatings, stoning, shipwrecks, various dangers, hardship, sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, nakedness, and other daily pressures. (See 2 Cor. 11:24-29.) Again and again, Paul saw evidence of God's control over his life and the gospel was advanced.

As you teach kids, emphasize that Paul trusted God to keep His promise to rescue them from the storm. He also encouraged the sailors to trust God too. God calls us to trust in His Son, Jesus, who died to rescue us from sin and death, and to tell others this good news. We can encourage others to trust God because we know He is good and in control.



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Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use sound effects:**

Play wind, thunder, and wave sounds to simulate the storm that Paul's ship encountered. Play the sounds of wood breaking to help kids imagine the ship breaking apart.

- **Use practical effects:**

Use an air cannon to blast the kids with wind. Hold their interest with a spray bottle filled with water to simulate the splashing waves.

The Shipwreck

Acts 27:13-44; 28:11-16

Paul was a prisoner in Caesarea. He had asked to see Caesar about his case. Caesar was the leader of the Roman Empire, **so Paul got on a ship with other prisoners going to Rome. The journey was difficult. Strong winds and rain tossed the ship.** The crew threw things overboard and tried to keep the ship from breaking apart, but the storm did not stop for many days. **All the people on the ship were afraid they would die.**

One night, God sent an angel to Paul. The angel told Paul to not 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 ship onto an island.

When the ship got close to an island, some of the sailors tried to escape in the lifeboat. Paul told them they would only be saved if they stayed on the ship. The sailors listened to Paul. No one had eaten in a long time, so Paul told them to eat. He thanked God and broke the bread, and everyone ate. Then they raised the sails and headed toward the island.

When they got close, **the ship struck a sandbar and stopped. The waves crashed into the ship, and it began to break into pieces.** The soldiers were afraid the prisoners would escape, so some of them wanted to kill the prisoners. But **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.

Three months later, Paul got onto another ship and sailed to Rome. Paul was still a prisoner, but instead of going to jail, Paul was allowed to live by himself in a house. A soldier stayed with him to guard him. People came to Paul's house and listened to him speak about the kingdom of God and about Jesus. Some of the people believed and followed Jesus.

Christ Connection: Paul trusted God to keep His promise to rescue them 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 tell others this good news.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
ADVENTURE!**

Invite kids 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

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KEY PASSAGE: Philippians 1:20-21

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: When should we tell others about Jesus? We should always tell others about Jesus even when it is difficult.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, ask them to describe a time they felt scared. What scared them? What made them feel better?

SAY • We've all been in scary situations before. We have also all been comforted by something, whether a person or even an object, like a blanket or stuffed animal. Today we'll hear about a time Paul was in a scary situation. We'll also hear about who comforted him.

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the "Shipwreck Word Search" on the activity page. Kids will find and circle the words hidden in the grid of letters.

SAY • The words you found all had to do with ships or sailing, just like our story today. We will hear about Paul on the way to Rome. While sailing to Rome, a large storm tossed Paul's boat! That sounds really scary. Do you think Paul was scared? We'll find out more in our story.

- "Shipwreck Word Search" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 2: Human battleship

Use chairs, clothespins, and a bedsheet to divide the room in half at chest height. Form two teams of kids. Each team will lie down on one side of the divider. Before playing the game, make sure the divider will not fall on the kids if it is hit or jostled. Kids will toss beach balls or foam balls back and forth over the divider. Kids may not get up or move around on the floor. If a kid catches a beach ball, the kid who threw it is out. If the ball hits a player who is unable to catch it, she is “hit.” After two hits, a kid is “sunk” and out of the game.

SAY • Great job with our game! Today we’re going to hear about Paul’s shipwreck. His ship wasn’t pelted by beach balls. Instead, his ship was in a huge storm. How would you feel if you were on a ship in a bad storm?

- bedsheet
- clothespins
- chairs
- beach balls or foam balls

OPTION 1: What protects us?

Ask the kids to draw pictures of some things used to protect people (sunscreen, bike helmet, safety goggles, seatbelts and so forth). Ask kids to think about how the objects protect us and what they protect us from. Then discuss situations where a given item might be more of a hindrance (such as wearing a bike helmet while swimming).

SAY • Sometimes we put a lot of faith in objects to protect us. Today we’ll hear about a time Paul was on a ship in a huge storm. The sailors thought that if the ship would hold out, they would be safe. But Paul helped them see that God would protect them!



LOW PREP

- paper
- pencils

Transition to teach the story

Teach the STORY

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Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire

[Leader enters wearing ragged clothing and a bandanna tied around his head.]

LEADER • Why hello there, my fellow castaways! You know, I was just remembering how I got to this little island. I was on a sailboat by myself in the middle of the ocean when a huge storm came up. The waves seemed hundreds of feet high. The winds were so strong, the boat tossed and turned for a long time. I thought I was a goner for sure! But then the sailboat hit the reef just off the coast of this island here. I was washed ashore, and I've been stuck here ever since, waiting for someone to rescue me.

Storms can be very dangerous for boats because waves can fill the boat with water, causing it to sink. The wind can also get so strong that it breaks the ship apart or makes it impossible to steer.

You know, my story reminds me of to a story in

the Bible about Paul being shipwrecked on his way to Rome. Do you want to hear it?

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Does anyone remember our big picture question?

[*Allow kids to respond.*] That's right! ***When should we tell others about Jesus?*** Who knows the answer?

[*Allow kids to respond.*] Yes! ***We should always tell others about Jesus even when it is difficult.*** Our big picture question reminds me of God's plan for Paul. Even though Paul faced hard times because he told people the truth about Jesus, God continued to give Paul opportunities to share the gospel every where he went. Even when he was in chains! Just as God used Paul, He chooses to use all believers to share the good news of Jesus with others. When we trust God, we know that even our difficult circumstances can be used for His glory and our good.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline or big story circle.

LEADER • We've been learning a lot about some really wild things that happened to Paul when he tried to share the gospel with people. We learned that some of the Jews wanted to kill him for talking about Jesus. Then last week we heard how Paul was able to share the gospel with really important people like kings and governors! God used Paul in incredible ways, but his life wasn't always easy. Today we're going to hear about another one of Paul's amazing adventures following Jesus.

• Giant Timeline or
Big Story Circle

- Bibles
- “The Shipwreck” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Acts 27:13-44; 28:11-16. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Shipwreck.”

LEADER • What an action-packed story! Paul was a prisoner on a ship headed for Rome when a huge storm destroyed it! How would you have felt if you were Paul? Confused? Scared? Wondering if God had abandoned you? We learn from the story that God sent an angel to Paul to encourage him, and Paul trusted that God would keep His word to protect him and the rest of the people on the ship.

In the storm, many of the sailors wanted to abandon the ship. They thought there was no way they would survive, but God promised to keep them safe if they stayed on the ship. When the ship began to break apart, I bet it was difficult to believe God was still in control. But God is always in control!

When we go through hard times, we may be tempted to think that God does not care about our suffering. That’s not true! That is a lie that our enemy wants us to believe so that we lose hope.

The truth is that we belong to God. God has promised to provide for us. He doesn’t always provide for us in the way we expect Him to, but His plans are good. Paul probably didn’t expect to face a shipwreck on his journey to Rome, but even in the midst of the dangerous storm, Paul was reminded that our God is good and He is trustworthy. **God protected Paul in the shipwreck so he could stand before Caesar.**

Christ connection

LEADER • Paul trusted God to keep His promise to rescue them from the storm. He encouraged the sailors to trust God too. God calls us to trust in His Son, Jesus, who died to rescue us from sin and death, and to tell others this good news. We trust Jesus in many ways, including for our salvation and to guide our lives.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Philippians 1:20-21.

LEADER • Have you ever waited expectantly for something? In these verses Paul says that he was eagerly expecting that Jesus would use his life to honor God. God allowed Paul to go through some pretty difficult things in his life. Even when Paul suffered, he still trusted God and desired to point others to Jesus. Lead boys and girls in singing “My Eager Expectation.”

- Key Passage Poster
- “My Eager Expectation” song

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • Can you remember a time when you felt discouraged? What did you do? Think about that as we watch this quick video.

Show the “Unit 34, Session 3” discussion starter video. Discuss how Ethan and Candace probably felt when no one bought their lemonade. What would have happened if they had given up? What are situations that might discourage Christians today? Why don’t we give up when things get difficult?

- “Unit 34, Session 3” discussion starter video

LEADER • When we feel discouraged, it can be hard to live on mission to tell others about Jesus. God wants us to tell others about Jesus so they may believe and

have life with Him. God's plans are good, and He is trustworthy. Even when we face difficult times, we can be sure that God is working through His people to glorify Himself and give life to the world.

Sing (4 minutes)

• "Unstoppable Victory"
song

LEADER • I love the story of God protecting Paul and the rest of the people on the ship. It reminds me that even when things in my life seem out of control, God is still in control. I'm so grateful for God's care and protection over me. His victory is certain; He cannot be stopped!

Sing together "Unstoppable Victory."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • God, we thank You for Your protection over us. We praise You for Your goodness and faithfulness to us. We thank You for holding our lives together when things feel out of control or scary. Comfort us and give us courage when we need it. Help us this week to step out in faith and share the gospel with others who need to hear about Your great power and mercy. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Apply the STORY

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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Display the key passage poster and invite the kids to say it aloud with you. Then challenge them to use silly voices (high-pitched, robot, pirate, and so forth). Cover the key passage poster and ask for volunteers to say the whole key passage from memory.

SAY • We usually think of dying as a bad thing, something to avoid. But Paul knew that even dying would be good because it would mean that he would be with Jesus! Paul had nothing to fear about death because he knew that Jesus had rescued him from his sin. We can have that same confidence when we put our faith in Jesus.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

• Bibles, 1 per kid
• Main Point Poster
• strips of paper
• markers

Ask a volunteer to tell you which book of the Bible the story came from. (*Acts*) Ask if the Book of Acts in the Old or New Testament? (*New*) Explain that the Book of Acts tells the story of early church and of the gospel spreading all over the world. Help kids find Acts 27:13-44; 28:11-16 in their Bibles.

Before class, create sentence strips with the story

sequence sentences below and mix them up. Invite the kids to review the story by putting the events in order. If you have a larger class, you may make multiple sets. Encourage kids to use their Bibles for reference if they need help. Make sure non-readers are paired with adult helpers or older readers during this review activity.

Story sequence sentences:

1. Paul was a prisoner and boarded a boat headed for Rome.
2. A storm swept in with strong wind and waves making sailing difficult.
3. The crew pulled in the lifeboat so it wouldn't float away and tied ropes under the ship to keep it from breaking apart.
4. The crew began throwing things overboard.
5. God sent an angel to Paul telling him to not be afraid because God would protect everyone on the ship.
6. Paul told his fellow passengers to take courage; God would save them!
7. Some sailors tried to get away on a lifeboat, but Paul told them they would only be saved if they stayed with the ship.
8. Paul broke bread and encouraged everyone to eat.
9. Julius, the army officer, would not allow the prisoners to be killed when the ship ran aground on a sandbar.
10. Paul and everyone on the ship made it safely to Malta.

SAY • God protected Paul in the shipwreck so he could stand before Caesar. Paul trusted that God would watch over him, and he was confident that God would be faithful. Even when we experience chaos or pain, we can be confident that God is good and He

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

will take care of us because we are His children.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: A boat in the storm

Invite kids to sit in two or three rows. You may use chairs set up in rows to designate where they should sit. Stand in front of the kids, and call out storm conditions and encourage the kids to move with you as you pretend to be on a boat.

Suggested conditions and reactions:

- Port side wave: Kids lean to their right as though a large wave hit the left or “port” side.
- Starboard wave: Kids lean to their left as though a large wave hit the right or “starboard” side.
- Hoist the sail: Kids all stand up.
- Giant wave: Kids lean back as if traveling up a wave before then leaning forward as though rushing down a wave.
- Whirlpool: Kids stand up and spin in a circle and sit back down.

SAY • That was a pretty fun game, but being in a storm in a real boat on the ocean would not be fun at all. I would be so scared! Paul and the sailors were probably afraid too, but **God protected Paul in the shipwreck so he could stand before Caesar.** We all face difficult and scary times in our lives. Even in the midst of them, we can trust that God is good and that He is working things together for His glory and our good. Our hope is not on things in this life, but in Jesus. When Jesus returns and fixes everything broken in the world, we will live forever with Him.



• chairs (optional)

OPTION 2: Shipwreck craft

Help kids cut paper plates in half, and give each kid half a paper plate. Encourage the kids to color their plate to look like a boat. Help them break craft sticks to glue around the edges to represent the boat falling apart. Then help kids write the main point on the back.

- paper plates
- scissors
- craft sticks
- markers
- glue sticks

SAY • God protected Paul in the shipwreck so he could stand before Caesar. The soldiers and sailors on the boat were afraid they would die in the storm. They couldn't see what God was doing. But God used Paul to guide them and encourage them to trust God. Paul pointed them to Jesus even in the midst of a scary storm. In our lives, we can trust Jesus no matter what difficulties we face, and we should encourage others to trust Jesus too.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.