

Paul Made Much of Jesus

BIBLE PASSAGE: Colossians 1:15–2:3

MAIN POINT: Jesus is better than anyone or anything else.

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 wrote his letter to the church at Colossae not long after he arrived in Rome as a prisoner. The letter served to correct false teaching in the church and to encourage right living among believers. Focus on verses 15-20, in which Paul described who Jesus is.

Paul's teaching to the Colossians was important because the believers were trying to figure out what it meant to follow Jesus. They were struggling to understand the gospel and discern what is really true. These are the same questions we face as believers today: Who is Jesus? What is the gospel? What is true about God and about myself?

Before you teach boys and girls about Paul's letter to the Colossians, pray for the Holy Spirit's help. Pray that Jesus would be lifted up and treasured. Keep these points in mind as you prepare for the session.

1. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. (Col. 1:15)
If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus. His life and teaching tells us what is true about God. He reflects God's character. (See Heb. 1:3.) Jesus Himself said, "The one who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

2. Jesus is Creator. (Col. 1:16-17) Because He created everything, He is in charge of everything—even invisible things! He controls and sustains all things. Because He is at the center, we can take comfort in Him even when life is hard.

3. Jesus is King. (Col. 1:18) The reality is that we live in God's kingdom. If we live for ourselves instead of Him, we sin. Sin is rebellion against the King. We deserve to die for our sin, but the good news—the gospel—is that Jesus came to save sinners.

Paul made much of Jesus because Jesus is better. He has authority over everything—including us and our salvation. Jesus is great, and He is all we need.

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The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Show emotions:**

Use facial expressions to show confusion, certainty, thought, and hope at appropriate times.

- **Adjust your posture:**

Stand or move to another spot between reading Paul's words and telling a narration segment.

Paul Made Much of Jesus

Colossians 1:15–2:3

When Paul was a prisoner in Rome, people brought him news about how believers in churches all over the world were doing. Paul had visited many of these churches, and he wrote letters to encourage the Christians in each church.

Paul wrote a letter to the church in Colossae (koh LAHS sih). **The Colossian believers knew the gospel, but false teachers had been telling them lies.** This confused them. **Some were saying there was a secret gospel only they knew about.** Paul wrote to remind them the truth about Jesus. **This is what Paul wrote:**

“Jesus shows us what God is like.

The Son of God existed before God created anything.

He created everything—everything in heaven and on earth,

everything you see and don't see;

everything exists for Him.

Jesus holds everything together.

The church—all the believers in the world—are the body, and He is the head.

God was happy to send His Son to earth to rescue people from sin through His blood on the cross.”

Paul reminded the believers that their sin had separated them from God. They were His enemies. **But now, they had salvation and forgiveness through Jesus.**

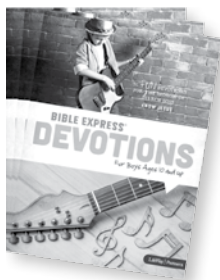
Paul had told them the complete gospel. Anyone who

came and said there was a secret gospel was lying.

“Be encouraged and love one another,” Paul wrote.

“I want you to know Jesus. All wisdom and knowledge is found in Him.”

Christ Connection: Paul encouraged believers by reminding them that Jesus is great. Jesus is God’s Son, and He died on the cross to rescue people from sin. The gospel is true, and Jesus is all we need.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD’S WORD?
GET
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

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

SESSION TITLE: Paul Made Much of Jesus

BIBLE PASSAGE: Colossians 1:15–2:3

MAIN POINT: Jesus is better than anyone or anything else.

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. Prompt kids to describe in one word a person they look up to or someone they think is great.

SAY • You shared some really interesting words to describe people. Today we are going to learn how Paul made much of someone great: Jesus! Paul wanted people to understand who Jesus is and why He is better than anyone or anything else.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “The Bible Tells Me So” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers
- Bibles

Invite kids to complete “The Bible Tells Me So” on the activity page. Kids should unscramble the letters to find what the Bible says about who Jesus is and what He has done. Provide Bibles for kids to look up the Bible references and check their work.

SAY • Everything in the Bible is true. The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. One thing the Bible teaches us is how great Jesus is. Today we’ll find out more.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: True/false hands

Instruct kids to sit in a circle. Give one kid a coin or other small object. He should put his hands behind his back and hide the coin in one fist. Then he should hold out his fists and tell two statements, one per hand.

For the hand with the coin, he will tell a true statement. For the empty hand, he will tell a false statement. Kids should guess which hand the object is in by guessing which statement is true. Play again with a new speaker.

SAY • Was it hard to figure out what was true and what was false? Today we will hear a story about a letter Paul wrote to help a church know what is true.



• coin or other small object

OPTION 2: People promotions

Form groups of three or four kids. Provide Bibles and encourage kids to choose a person from the Bible to make a poster about. Be prepared to provide suggestions. Consider writing these options on index cards:

- *Adam or Eve (Genesis 2–3)*
- *Abraham (Genesis 12:1-9)*
- *Moses (Exodus 3; 14:15-31)*
- *King David (1 Samuel 16–17)*
- *Jesus (John 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4)*

Instruct each group to make a poster profiling the person they chose. Then allow groups to present their posters.

SAY • The Bible tells us about some very memorable people from long ago. Paul the missionary dedicated his life to telling people about Jesus. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection changed everything. Let's hear more.

• Bibles, 1 per kid
• paper
• markers

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
• journal
• Bible

[Leader enters enthusiastically, pumping arms up and down in celebration. Greet kids warmly.]

LEADER • Hello! I'm so glad to see you. I'm pretty excited because this is my last day on this deserted island. I'm looking forward to being home again. I can't wait tell my friends and family members about my time on the island.

[Pick up the journal and Bible.] My whole time here, I've been making notes and drawing diagrams in my journal to help me remember everything that happened. I was thinking, when Paul was on his missionary journeys and spending time in prison and traveling, he wrote letters to churches.

Today I want to take a closer look at a letter Paul wrote to a church in Colossae. We can find that letter in the Bible: the Book of Colossians. People from Colossae were called Colossians.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Before we get started, let's review our big picture question. Girls will ask the boys our big picture question, and boys will respond with the answer.

Girls, go! [*Wait for girls to ask the big picture question.*]

When should we tell others about Jesus?

OK, boys, let's hear the answer. [*Wait for boys to say the big picture answer.*] ***We should always tell others about Jesus even when it is difficult.*** OK, now let's switch. [*This time, boys ask the question and the girls answer it.*]

Great job. We've seen how Paul told about Jesus even in difficult situations. We don't have to rely on ourselves to find the power or courage to share our faith. God fills us with the Holy Spirit when we trust in Him, and the Spirit gives us power to trust and obey. We just have to be willing to follow His lead!

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline or big story circle. Point to previous stories as you review.

• Giant Timeline or
Big Story Circle

LEADER • When Paul wrote the Book of Colossians, he was in prison in Rome. Do you remember how he got there? Paul obeyed God's call to tell people about Jesus, but the Jews made a plan to stop Paul. They tried to kill him, but when Paul was arrested, **God protected him so he could preach about Jesus.**

Then Paul stood before rulers who tried to decide if he had done anything wrong. Paul wasn't afraid of people with power; in fact, **Paul preached about Jesus to governors and kings.** This was part of God's plan for Paul's life! Paul was on his way to Rome to

see Caesar when a storm caused the ship to wreck. **God protected Paul in the shipwreck so he could stand before Caesar.**

Paul made it to Rome, but he was still a prisoner. Last week we learned about a letter Paul wrote to the believers in Philippi. **While he was in prison, Paul told the Philippian church to be joyful.** Let's find out what Paul had to say in his letter to the Colossians.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

- Bibles
- "Paul Made Much of Jesus" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Open your Bible to Colossians 1:15–2:3. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Paul Made Much of Jesus."

LEADER • Paul's letter to the church at Colossae was very important because the believers were trying to figure out what it meant to follow Jesus. They might have been wondering, *Who is Jesus? What is the gospel?* Paul wanted them to know what is true about God and what is true about people.

In his letter, Paul explained that Jesus is the image of the invisible God. That means that if you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus' life and listen to His teaching.

Paul said that Jesus is Creator. Because He created everything, He is in charge of everything. We can trust Him even when life is hard.

Paul also showed that Jesus is King. **Jesus is better than anyone or anything else.**

Christ connection

LEADER • It's not hard to lose sight of what is most important in life. Paul encouraged believers by reminding them that Jesus is great. Jesus is God's Son, and He died on the cross to rescue people from sin. The gospel is true, and Jesus is all we need.

Key passage (5 minutes)

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

LEADER • Let's sing this verse together to remind us of the truth that Paul shares. Today as we sing our key passage song, remember that these words were written by someone who loved Jesus very much and knew that Jesus is most important.

Lead boys and girls in singing "My Eager Expectation."

Note: You may use this opportunity to 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 Poster
- "My Eager Expectation" song

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • Have you ever met someone who is famous?
[*Allow kids to respond.*] Think about how people treat others who are famous. Now watch this video.

Show the "Unit 34, Session 5" discussion starter video.

Then lead kids to discuss the following questions:

- Why do you think the kids were surprised?
- Imagine meeting the creator of your favorite show or movie. What would you say?
- Who deserves all the attention, credit, and glory in life? Why did Paul make much of Jesus?

LEADER • **Jesus is better than anyone or anything else.**

God calls us to tell others about Him and focus on Him in everything we do.

- "Unit 34, Session 5" discussion starter video

• “Unstoppable Victory”
song

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • Knowing Jesus gives us a reason to celebrate. Let’s celebrate all that He is as we worship Him in song today.

Sing together “Unstoppable Victory.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord God, we thank You for sending Jesus so we can know You. We trust that Jesus is all we need. Help us make much of Jesus, for Your glory. We want our lives to show that Jesus is most important. In Jesus’ name, 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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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: When should we tell others about Jesus? We should always tell others about Jesus even when it is difficult.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

As a group, make up motions for each word in the key passage. Practice saying the passage several times by performing the motions. Then each round drop a word, substituting the motion for the word it represents. Consider these examples for motions:

Tip: Adjust words and motions based on your preferred translation.

- *expectation*: Clasp your hands, interlocking fingers.
 - *hope*: Press palms together as in prayer.
 - *Christ*: Form your hand into a *C*. Hold it near your opposite shoulder; then arc down to other hip as if buckling the shoulder strap on a seat belt.
 - *honored*: Move hands upward to act out placing a crown on your head.
 - *life* or *live*: Move your hands with thumb and index finger in an *L* shape from your waist to your chest.
 - *death* or *die*: Hold one hand palm up and the other palm down. Simultaneously turn over your hands.
 - *gain*: Pull hands toward you in a grabbing motion.
- SAY** • It is one thing to say this truth, but Paul lived a life that backed it up by his actions. He taught that **Jesus is better than anyone or anything else**. May we be bold enough to make much of Jesus too.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Form two teams of kids. Distribute Bibles and lead kids to find Colossians 1. Give each team one small chalkboard or dry erase board, chalk or a marker, and an eraser.

Explain that you will read a sentence. Teams should determine if the sentence is true or false. Designate a kid on each team to be the writer. He should write the team's answer on the chalkboard. Encourage the rest of the kids to agree on an answer. They may refer to their Bibles.

Allow kids 15 seconds to write an answer. Then call for both teams to hold up their chalkboards. Award a point for each correct answer. For false statements, prompt kids to correct the sentence.

1. The Book of Colossians immediately follows the Book of Ephesians. (*false, Philippians*)
2. The Colossian believers had never heard the gospel. (*false, already heard; Col. 1:5*)
3. Jesus shows us what God is like. (*true, Col. 1:15*)
4. The Son of God existed before God created anything. (*true, Col. 1:15*)
5. Love holds all things together. (*false, Jesus; Col. 1:17*)
6. God was very sad to send His Son to earth to rescue people from sin. (*false, pleased; Col. 1:19*)
7. Paul reminded the believers that their sin had separated them from God. (*true, Col. 1:21*)
8. All wisdom and knowledge is found in books. (*false, in Jesus; Col. 2:2-3*)

SAY • Paul encouraged believers by reminding them that Jesus is better. Jesus is God's Son, and He died on the cross to rescue people from sin. The gospel is true. **Jesus is better than anyone or anything else**, and He is all we need.

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- small chalkboards or dry erase boards, 2
- chalk or markers
- erasers
- watch or timer (optional)

LOW PREP

- paper
- pencils

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: All we need

Form groups of three or four kids. Give each group paper and a pencil. Explain that you will give a prompt and groups should list everything they need for that activity. For example, if the prompt is “basketball game,” kids might list *uniforms, basketball, court, ball, referees, coach*, and so on.

After a minute, call for kids to share their lists with the group. Then play again using another prompt.

Sample activity questions:

1. What do you need to make chocolate chip cookies?
2. What do you need to make slime?
3. What do you need to play baseball?
4. What do you need to go camping?
5. What do you need to go fishing?

SAY • What do you need to be made right with God? [*Allow kids to respond.*] Jesus is all we need. We trust in His work on the cross and receive Him with empty hands of faith. Paul boldly and clearly reminded the Colossians who Jesus is. Paul taught that **Jesus is better than anyone or anything else**, and He is all we need. We can share this good news with others.

OPTION 2: Gospel travel cards

Print “The Gospel Travel Cards” on heavyweight paper, one copy per kid. Provide scissors for kids to cut apart their cards. Demonstrate how to hole punch the corner of each card. Distribute metal rings for kids to attach to their cards.

Call on kids to read each card aloud. Remind kids that they can use these cards to tell other people about Jesus. Suggest they practice sharing the gospel so they will be prepared when an opportunity comes. Encourage them to

- “The Gospel Travel Cards” printable
- scissors
- hole punch
- 1-inch loose-leaf rings

read the referenced Bible verses at home.

SAY • Paul was always ready and willing to share the hope he had in Jesus. He taught that **Jesus is better than anyone or anything else.**

Take home these gospel travel cards and put them on your backpack and ask God to give you a chance to share the gospel with someone who needs to know Jesus. God calls us to make much of Jesus too.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- 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 to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray that boys and girls would grow to know and love Jesus, treasuring Him and His glory more than anything else.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Choose the Truth" on the activity page.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "Choose the Truth" activity 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.