

LESSON 61

Paul in Chains

ACTS 28:11-31



BIBLE TRUTH

NOTHING CAN STOP THE ADVANCE OF THE GOSPEL

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 139)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

Where Is the Gospel?

SUPPLIES: Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is the Gospel?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: snack food and beverage

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5–10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20–30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES: coloring page for NT Lesson 61—one for each child; markers or crayons

Paul in Chains

SUPPLIES: actor to play the role of Paul; costume; chain or rope; copy of Acts 26:4–18

Passing the Chain

SUPPLIES: 12–18 inches of heavy chain; puppet

7. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

TOTAL 60–75 MIN

THE LESSON

OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

In today's lesson the children will learn how Paul preached the gospel even though he was in chains.

Start by asking the class if they remember something about Paul. (You can use the story of Paul being blinded on the road to Damascus as a story the children may remember.)

Tell the class that after Paul was chosen by God to take the message about Jesus to the world, he was arrested and put into prison and that today we are going to learn about Paul's life and what he did while he was in prison.

Ask for a volunteer to pretend to be Paul. (Pick an older child who isn't easily upset.) Sit the volunteer on a chair facing the class, and ask her to put her hands behind her back. Gently grip her hands with your own and tell her she is a pretend prisoner. Ask her how she might feel if she were a real prisoner. Ask her how she would feel if you were not going to let her go for a whole day, a whole week, a whole year. After your questions, release the volunteer.

Ask the class how they would feel. (Draw them out to talk about sadness and anger.)

Talk about what Paul did while he was in prison that shows he was still following God—how he didn't become discouraged but used his imprisonment as a chance to share the gospel with whoever would listen.

Take time to pray and thank God for our freedom in Christ. Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read story 139, "Paul in Chains," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION **5 MIN**

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **Why did Paul go to Rome?**
(Paul was a Roman citizen, and every Roman citizen could appeal to Caesar and be tried in Rome when arrested.)
- **In Rome was Paul put in prison?**
(No, Paul was under house arrest, which means he could go on living in his home but was chained there and could not leave. This is much nicer than prison, but it is still difficult.)
- **What did the soldiers do to Paul to make sure he did not run away?**
(They put a chain on him.)

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Paul said, "It is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain" (Acts 28:20). Jesus, the Messiah, who died upon the cross and rose again on the third day, is the hope of Israel that Paul spoke about. To put it another way, Paul said, "I was arrested for preaching the gospel." Once in Rome, Paul knew that he was under house arrest and not in a dungeon so that he could preach the gospel freely. In Philippians 1:12, Paul said that the advancement of the gospel was the reason for his imprisonment in Rome.

For two years Paul stayed under house arrest, sharing with anyone who would come to listen. He proclaimed the "kingdom of God and [taught] about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance" (Acts 28:31). Even when others were preaching with false motives (to make a name for themselves) and in competition with Paul, Paul rejoiced. To him it was most important that the message go forth.

SNACK QUESTIONS **10 MIN**

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **Read Acts 28 :24 to the children. Did everyone believe Paul’s message about Jesus?**
(No, not everyone believed Paul.)

- **Does everyone who hears the story and message of Jesus believe today?**
(No, there are still people who do not believe in Jesus.)

- **Who helps us to believe that the story about Jesus is true?**
(The Holy Spirit working in our hearts helps us to believe the story is true. When we believe in something we cannot see, we call that believing by faith.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY **5-10 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS **20-30 MIN**

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 61—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **What is Paul doing in the picture?**
(Paul is writing.)

- **What do you think Paul is writing?**
(Paul wrote the book of Philippians while under house arrest and he shared the gospel with all those who would visit him.)

■ **What do you think Paul would have told the guards?**

(Paul would have told the story of how Jesus met him on the road, blinded him, and changed his life. The guards began to understand the gospel and realized Paul had not done anything wrong but was being held because of his faith.)

Paul in Chains

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ actor to play the role of Paul
- ✓ costume
- ✓ chain or rope
- ✓ copy of Acts 26:4–18

Have one of the teachers or helpers work to present the following drama about Paul. Use a chain or rope to tie Paul’s ankle to a chair.

Narrator: Explain that Paul is in Rome under house arrest.

Paul: Sitting on a chair with a chain around his ankle attached to the chair. Paul suddenly looks up and notices the children as though they were Roman visitors to his home. He greets them and has a pretend dialogue, sharing his testimony as recorded in Acts 26:4–18. He could also share from Philippians 1:12–14 about how he believes his imprisonment will result in the gospel being proclaimed to all who come to visit.

It is not important that your actor memorize to the last word everything he will say. He should also feel freedom to add small details that are not in the text to make his story more believable.

Passing the Chain

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ 12–18 inches of heavy chain
- ✓ puppet

Pass the chain around the class as you talk about Paul being held prisoner for the gospel. Read Philippians 1:12–14 to the children and help them see what amazing grace was on Paul’s life for him to be under arrest and have a good attitude. Passing the chain around the room should help the children imagine what it must have been like to be chained.

If you have a puppet, give the puppet a chance to see how heavy the chain is. The puppet can react dramatically, as though the chain weighs 200 pounds. You can add a lot of fun with the puppet as you make it react to your telling of the story.

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

Take time at the end of class to thank God for what you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as a way for the children to remember today's lesson.

