

Paul's Journey to Rome

Acts 23:11

QUESTIONS

AGES 3–5

1. Where was Paul sailing to and what happened on the way? *Rome, but a huge storm wrecked the ship.*
2. What two things did God promise Paul during the storm? *God promised Paul would still preach in Rome, and that everyone else would be saved too.*
3. What happened to the ship and everyone on it? *The ship crashed, but everyone made it to Malta and survived.*
4. Why was Paul a prisoner? *He was arrested in Jerusalem for disturbing the Jews by his preaching. He was never released because the governors there wanted a bribe, not justice.*

AGES 6–8

1. How did the centurion show he trusted Paul while at Sidon? *He allowed Paul to go see his friends.*
2. How did Paul show wisdom and boldness in Fair Havens? *Even though he was just a prisoner, he spoke up and said it was foolish to sail during stormy winter weather.*
3. What did God use to get the men on the ship to stop trusting themselves? *A huge storm.*
4. How long were they caught in the storm? *Fourteen days (Acts 27:33).*

AGES 9–11

1. Why did Paul lead with such confidence, even though only a prisoner? *He found strength not in himself, but in the promises of God.*
2. How did Paul care for the needs of others? *He encouraged them to eat, and he prevented the sailors from abandoning everyone else.*
3. How did Paul's godly character save all the prisoners at the end? *The centurion kept the prisoners alive because he wanted to keep Paul alive.*
4. According to Isaiah, why did most of the Jews refuse to believe, and what did the Jews lose? *They lost out on spiritual healing and salvation.*

INTRODUCE

AGES 3–5

PROMISE KEEPER

Make a promise to the children at the beginning of class. Talk about things you are going to do to help you remember to keep it: write a note on the board, write a note on your hand, tie a string around your finger, set a reminder in your phone, ask the class to remind you, and ask another teacher to remind you. Do people sometimes forget to keep their promises? In today's lesson, God makes a promise to Paul. Do you think He will remember to keep it?

CAPTIVE AUDIENCE

Using paper chains or string, tie yourself to a helper or another child (guard). Ask the children how they would feel if they were chained to another person all day. Show them how hard it would be to move around. After talking about all the bad parts, ask if there are any good parts about being chained to someone. Show them how Paul could minister to his "captive audience." Any time he talked, prayed, or wrote a letter, the guard would see it.

AGES 6–8

WHAT IS A BROKEN PROMISE?

What's another name for a broken promise? A lie. When someone is unable to keep a promise, they fail to do what they said they would do. This should cause us to think carefully about every promise we make. It also points out something amazing about God: He never lies (Num 23:19; Titus 1:2). He never fails to keep His promises! If God says it, He will do it.

UNSTOPPABLE GOSPEL

Give each child a maze to complete. Put a picture of Paul (or write his name) at the beginning of the maze and write "Rome" at the end. Explain that the gospel will spread, no matter what obstacles stand in its way. We will see this in today's lesson. Paul is in prison, but the gospel is not. It continues to spread, even while Paul is in chains.

AGES 9–11

CASH ONLY, PLEASE

Hold up a check and ask the children what you're holding. This check is a promise that you're going to pay for your purchase. So why do many private sellers not accept personal checks? For example, many car salesmen will only accept cash or a certified check (a check that is guaranteed by the bank). Many private sellers won't accept personal checks because people fail to keep their promise to pay. They write a check, but there isn't enough money in their bank account to cover the cost, and it doesn't go through. However, when God writes a check (makes a promise), it always goes through.

ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME?

Many of us at some point tuned out our parents or a teacher as they were talking to us. Demonstrate this by daydreaming, texting on a cell phone, sleeping, or talking with someone else while the children share with you times when they've tuned someone out. Even though we have ears, there are times we fail to hear and heed instruction. Unfortunately, this refusal to listen often brings serious consequences. In today's lesson, Paul experiences this firsthand as he interacts with the Jews in Rome. Their refusal to hear the gospel brought serious consequences to both Jews and Gentiles.

ILLUSTRATE

AGES 3–5

TOSSED TO AND FRO

To illustrate Paul's ship being tossed to and fro, take a huge sheet and lay it across the middle of the classroom. Place a soft ship in the middle of the sheet, and instruct the children to gather around and place both hands upon the sheet. As the class slowly waves the sheet up and down, the ship will begin to be tossed back and forth. As the tossing of the sheet intensifies, explain to the children what happened to Paul and his ship in today's lesson.

GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES

God used Paul for a very special mission: he preached the gospel to the Gentiles. A Gentile was any person who was not a Jew. The Old Testament focuses almost entirely on the Jews. Part of the exciting message of the New Testament was that God had a plan for the Gentiles as well. God wanted to bless the Gentiles by allowing them to be saved and to have a relationship with Him, just like the kind of relationship He wanted to have with the Jews. Do the children know what adoption is? Explain that God graciously chose to adopt the Gentiles even though He already had children through the Jews.

AGES 6–8

GROUNDED

When people in America are arrested, they are taken to prison. They live in cells behind bars; however, in Paul's case, he was actually a prisoner inside a normal house. He was not allowed to leave the house and was probably always chained to one of his guards. This is similar to what it's like being "grounded." Have the children ever been grounded? How does this differ from prison?

THE GIDEONS

Do the children know about the Gideons? It is a ministry that seeks to share the Scriptures with all people. The ministry began in 1908 by placing Bibles in hotel rooms and still operates today. Have the children ever seen a Bible with the Gideons' logo on it in a hotel room? The Gideons, like Jesus and Peter and Paul, understand that the gospel is based on the Scriptures. Therefore, they do everything they can to get the Scriptures into the hands of as many men and women as possible.

AGES 9–11

CLEAN, FRESH, WHITE APRON

Imagine you're out to eat at a restaurant and your server brings your food to the table wearing a filthy, smelly, old apron. Would that be appetizing? Even though the food might be amazing, the presentation would surely impact your appreciation of it. We also make the gospel look bad by living a disobedient, filthy life. What kind of "apron" are you wearing as you serve up the Gospel?

DRY BONES

Paul was in prison "because of the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20). The prophet Ezekiel used this word "hope" in his vision of dry bones (Ezek 37:11). His vision of God's Spirit breathing new life into dry bones showed that Israel's hope was in God's promise to breathe new, eternal life into Israel and restore them to their land (37:11–14). Bring a chicken bone to class as an illustration. What would it take to give this bone new life?