

GOD USES PAUL

Bible Basis: Acts 16:16–36; 1 Thessalonians 1:3–5; 3:9–13; 4:16–18; 5:16–28; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 12:12–18, 27; 13:1–7; 15:21; 16:23–24; Galatians 5:22–25; 6:18

Bible Verse: “He asked, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus.’”
—Acts 16:30–31, NIRV

Bible Point: Jesus saves us if we believe in him. I can choose to believe.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 29: “God Uses Paul”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: Go Signs photocopied onto green card stock, Stop Signs photocopied onto red card stock, tape, wooden craft sticks, permanent marker. Templates for the signs are available with this lesson’s activity sheets.

Preparation: Cut out the Go Signs and the Stop Signs.

Give each child a Go Sign, a Stop Sign, and 2 craft sticks. Help the children tape their signs onto the craft sticks. Write their names on the craft sticks.

Say, “Today we are going to hear a story about a man named Saul. We will use our signs to help us tell the story.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 29, “God Uses Paul,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Saul did not like people who followed Jesus. He wanted to put them in jail. Should Saul GO, and keep doing what he’s doing, or should he STOP? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

One day he was going to arrest some of Jesus’ followers, when a bright light flashed in the sky and blinded him. It was Jesus! Jesus said, “Saul! Why are you against me?” Should Jesus GO and talk to Saul, or should he STOP and let Saul throw Jesus’ followers in jail? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

After that miracle, Saul believed in Jesus. A few days later, he got his sight back. He decided to change his name to Paul and travel to many places to tell people about Jesus. Should Saul GO and keep telling people about Jesus, or should he STOP? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

Paul told lots of people about Jesus. But this made some people angry. They wanted Paul and his friend Silas to go to jail! Should the people GO and put Paul and Silas in jail, or should they STOP and let them talk about Jesus? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

The people made the wrong decision. They had Paul and Silas thrown into prison. The guards took Paul's and Silas's clothes. The guards beat them and put chains on their feet. This would be a really hard thing to go through! So what do you think? Should they STOP following Jesus, because sometimes it's difficult, or should they GO follow Jesus anyway? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

Paul and Silas followed Jesus. They sang songs and prayed even while they were in jail. Suddenly an earthquake shook the prison and the prison doors flew open. Should Paul and Silas GO and run from the prison, or should they STOP and be honest with the jail guard? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

I would have wanted to GO! But they didn't. They knew the jail guard would be killed if he lost any prisoners. So they stayed in jail. Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself. We are all here." The jail guard hurried to Paul and Silas. They told him about Jesus, and he believed. The jail guard took them to his home and family, and his whole family believed in Jesus.

Paul and Silas were freed from jail. Do you think they should stay safe and STOP telling people about Jesus, or do you think they should GO and tell people about Jesus, even though they might get into trouble? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

Paul and Silas decided to GO. They kept traveling around, telling people about Jesus. Paul wrote lots of letters to churches he had visited, encouraging them to know and love Jesus. His letters are now part of the Bible!

So, what did we learn from Paul and Silas? Should we STOP believing in Jesus, or should we GO and believe in Jesus and tell other people about him? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

After the Bible story, ask:

- What did Saul want to do to people who followed Jesus? (*put them in jail*)
- What miracle happened to him one day? (*A bright light flashed and blinded him; Jesus talked to him.*)
- What new name did he choose? (*Paul*)
- Whom did he travel with? (*Silas*)
- What happened to Paul and Silas? (*They were thrown in prison.*)
- What did they do in prison? (*They sang praises to God; they prayed.*)
- What did God send? (*an earthquake*)
- After the earthquake, who believed in Jesus? (*the jail guard*)
- Did Paul and Silas stop telling people about Jesus? (*no*)

Say, **“God helped Paul and Silas because they believed in him. You can believe in Jesus, too! You can tell others about him, just like Paul and Silas did.”**

Pray with your children that they will be faithful to tell other people about Jesus’ love.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: SAUL

Stuff you need: Bible-time costumes and props, or towels, bathrobes, and ropes (to use as belts)

Have children dress in Bible-time costumes and act out Saul’s story. Let them all pretend to be traveling on a donkey. When you flip the lights on and off quickly (so no one becomes scared), have them fall to the ground. Then say, **“Saul, why are you hurting me?”** They can answer, “Lord, who are you?” Say, **“I am Jesus.”** Have the children sit down and close their eyes. You can touch them one by one and say, **“See, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”** Explain how Paul no longer hurt Jesus’ followers, because now he was a follower.

OPTION 2: EARTHQUAKE DANCE

Stuff you need: CD player, children’s praise songs

Say, **“The earthquake woke up the jailer when he was sleeping. When I play the music, everyone dance. When I randomly stop the music, everyone stop, drop to the floor, and pretend to be asleep like the jailer. When I start the music again, pretend it’s an earthquake waking you up! Jump up and start dancing!”**

Play several rounds of this game.

OPTION 3: MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE

Stuff you need: Make the Right Choice Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Talk about making right choices. How do you decide when to STOP and when to GO? Talk about what is going on in each picture. Put an X through the picture that shows a bad choice. Color the pictures that show good choices. (Scribblers will color the whole sheet, which is fine.)

OPTION 4: PAUL AND SILAS

Stuff you need: Paul and Silas Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Have the children color the picture of Paul and Silas.

OPTION 5: GOD LOVES YOU GIFT

Stuff you need: God Loves You Hearts Activity Sheet, small terra-cotta plant pots, stickers, markers, stick-on foam shapes, floral foam cut to fit the pots, wooden craft sticks, glue

Preparation: Photocopy and cut out the God Loves You Hearts

Give each child a pot and a variety of stickers, markers, and stick-on foam shapes to decorate the pot. When they are done, put the floral foam into the pot. Put a dot of glue on each craft stick and let the children stick a God Loves You heart to the glue. Have them slide their sticks into the craft foam.

Say, **“Just like Paul and Silas, we can tell people how much God loves them. The heart on your craft says, ‘God loves you.’ Give this gift to someone to tell them how much God loves them.”**

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 29*. Say, **“The front of this card will remind you that Jesus helped Paul and Silas. Show your parents the back and tell them that you can choose to believe in Jesus.”** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

Use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.