



Spreading the Message of Jesus to the World!

TEEN BIBLE STUDY
Leader's Guide

Opening Prayer: Give me a caring heart, O Lord, to love and seek the lost. Overcome my fear and grant me courage to share my hope of salvation with those who have no hope. Make me faithful in my daily life so that all I say and do may glorify you. Amen.

Opening Activity: Think, Pair, Share

- **Think:** Read Acts 1:8. What does Jesus mean, “You will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth?”
- **Pair:** After 1 minute, pair up with a classmate and discuss your answers together.
- **Share:** After 2 minutes, we will come together as a class and put all of our answers together.

Write and add responses here:

A witness is someone who sees an event and can tell others about that event. Students might make the connection that, though we haven't “seen” Christ or his resurrection, we look to him with eyes of faith and now we tell others about the events of his life, which are life-saving for all the world. They might also include the fact that we need to tell all nations about the saving gospel message (“to the ends of the earth”). Some might include the idea that we will want to include an accurate and complete picture of the person, Jesus Christ, for whom we are witnesses. We should be faithful witnesses for all of God's Word, not just the parts we think are important.

Today's Objectives:

1. You will learn and appreciate the power of the gospel in the life of the apostle Paul.
2. You will study and understand how Paul and his companions shared the message of Jesus, even under difficult circumstances.
3. Using the example of Paul, and with the power of the Holy Spirit, you will look for opportunities to spread the message of Jesus and put full trust in that message.

Paul: Enemy Turned Disciple

1. **Read Acts 8:1a.** To what was Saul (Paul) giving his approval?
Saul was giving his approval to the stoning of Stephen. Depending upon the level and knowledge of the class, the teacher may have to go into a bit more background on the apostle Paul and his zealous persecution of the New Testament Christians. For the purposes of time, the stoning of Stephen is the only episode that will be studied in this lesson.
2. **Read Acts 9:1-19.** Knowing what you know about Saul, why does this episode surprise you?
Especially focus on Acts 9:15-16, "But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." God **CHOSE** this murderer of Christians to be his instrument for the advancement of the NT church.
3. What other Biblical examples can you think of where God used "flawed" human beings to achieve great things with his Word?
Answers may vary, but other Biblical examples are: David, Moses, Elijah, all the Disciples, etc. It shouldn't surprise us because the power of God's Word is what changes hearts. The treasure of the gospel is **ALWAYS** presented by flawed and sinful human beings (Treasure in jars of clay, 2 Corinthians 4:7)
4. Why shouldn't it surprise us that Saul/Paul could be Jesus' "chosen instrument"?
It shouldn't surprise us because Jesus does this daily with pastors, teachers, parents, etc. All of them are sinful and flawed human beings. If we get caught up in the WHO, we lose sight of the power of God and just how much it can accomplish.

Truth #1: The message of the gospel turned Saul from being an ENEMY of Christ to being a FAITHFUL DISCIPLE.

Jesus' New Disciple and the Power of God's Word

Note: The teacher might want to recount for the students that Paul was headed to Macedonia (and therefore Philippi) because of a vision he had (Acts 16:6-10). In that vision he saw a man from Macedonia pleading for Paul's help. The man in the vision isn't identified, but Paul and his companions felt as if this was a vision that needed to be followed, as verse 10 states, "...God had called us to preach to the gospel to them."

5. **Read Acts 16:11-15.** How was the conversion of Lydia and the conversion of Paul similar? (especially note verse 14b)
The conversion of Lydia and Paul are similar in that they came about only by the power of God's Word and the Holy Spirit "opening the hearts" of both.
6. How did Lydia's conversion benefit her entire family?
Lydia's entire family was benefited by her conversion in that she brought God's Word into her house and had them all baptized.

7. How did Lydia instantly show herself to be someone who would use her gifts in thanksgiving for what the Lord had done for her?

Lydia opened up her home to Paul and his traveling companions.

8. **Read Acts 16:16-21.** Why was this possessed slave girl valuable to her owners?

She was valuable to her owners because she could predict the future for them and was earning them money.

9. How did Paul make it clear that it wasn't by his own power that the evil spirit was driven from the slave girl?

Paul said, "In the name of Jesus Christ..." This phrase made it clear that Paul wasn't seeking attention for himself or was given any sort of special power, but rather, it was only because of the power of God and his Word that Paul able to drive the spirit out.

10. How did her owners react to the spirit being driven from her?

The owners of the slave girl seized Paul and Silas and had them appear before the magistrates saying, "These men are throwing our city into an uproar."

11. **Read Acts 16:22-40.** What was the result of Paul and Silas being taken before the magistrates?

They were beaten and thrown into prison.

12. How did Paul and Silas show that being in prison wasn't going to stop them from being "Christians"?

They sang hymns and prayed.

13. Why do you think that Paul and Silas didn't escape from prison, even though they had the chance to do just that? Would you have done the same thing?

One possible answer: As Christians, even though they were falsely imprisoned, they knew that their imprisonment came from the government of that jurisdiction and it wasn't their right to escape. They may have seen God's hand, even in false imprisonment.

14. What was the result of the fact that they didn't escape?

An opportunity to tell the jailer about Jesus came about. The jailer and his entire household were baptized.

Truth #2: God's Word can CHANGE hearts! Even under the most difficult of circumstances.

Now It's Our Turn

15. **Read Matthew 28:19-20.** What is the role of all Christians, now that faith has been worked in their hearts?

All Christians should look for every opportunity to tell others about the message of the gospel.

16. ROADBLOCKS? What are some of the excuses we typically come up with to NOT share the gospel with others?

Answers will vary, but will include the following:

- a. Feeling dumb
- b. Worried about what they will think
- c. Someone else will tell them
- d. What if I say the wrong thing
- e. What if they reject me and make fun of me
- f. What if I lose social status by telling others

It might be worth studying Exodus 3-4 to see that even Moses had a whole litany of similar excuses.

17. ANSWERS TO OUR ROADBLOCKS. **Read Zechariah 4:6, John 14:16-17, and Matthew 28:20b.** How does God respond to our excuses?

We need not worry about our own weaknesses or how people will respond to the gospel message. Jesus promises to be with us always as we carry out this command to go and tell “to the ends of the earth”. Jesus also promises us the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen us in all our endeavors in his name.

18. Who in your life needs to hear the gospel?

Friends, Relatives, Neighbors, Others?

Truth #3: We need to look for OPPORTUNITIES to share God’s Word with others, trusting in the POWER of the GOSPEL.

Closing Hymn Verse, CW566:2, “We All Are One in Mission”

We all are called to service, to witness in God’s name.
Our ministries are diff’rent; our purpose is the same;
To touch the lives of others with God’s surprising grace,
So ev’ry folk and nation may feel God’s warm embrace.

Go and Tell! To the Ends of the Earth!