

PAUL PERSECUTOR AND PREACHER

PLEASE NOTE!

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Introduction

Teaching Bible truths

We fall short of our responsibility as teachers if we only tell children Bible stories. It is essential that children learn the truths those stories were written down to teach us, and that we then take them a step further to show what that truth means to them in their daily lives. Of course, we cannot in one lesson cover all the teaching any particular story would provide, so in each of these lessons one central truth has been chosen. The teaching of the central truth has been woven throughout the narrative, but to help you in your preparation the teaching sections have been marked “CT”. These are also marked out in the lesson plan.

You will notice that the central truths are marked with a “U” or an “S” to show the kind of children the truth is applied to - unsaved or saved. This is also made clear in the text by using phrases such as, “If you have not trusted the Lord Jesus to forgive your sin ...” or, “Christian, you ...”.

The application of the truth has been highlighted with a line beside the text. You may feel it necessary to adapt the applications to better suit the children you teach. For example, the application may use a boy’s name, yet you have only girls present. It could be that the application given is more applicable to older children, while yours are very young. Make the changes you feel are necessary. The important thing is that the Word of God is applied to their lives.

Make yourself available for counselling

When you present the Gospel message, there will be children who will respond to it independently. They may or may not at a later date tell you that they have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. There will, however, be others who would like some help. They may have questions to ask; they may need help or encouragement in knowing what to say.

As you teach the saved children, there may be times when they would like advice in a difficult situation; they may need clarification on how a particular lesson applies to their daily lives; they may find themselves in a situation where they do not know what the Bible says they should do; they may want to share a difficulty so that you can pray for them, especially if you are the only Christian support they have.

For these reasons it is important that the children know you are available to talk. It is also important that they know when and where to go when they want to talk to you. Finally, it is essential that unsaved children do not confuse coming to the Lord Jesus with coming to you.

In all cases you should not make yourself available at the same time as giving the Gospel invitation, so that the children never get the impression that they cannot come to Christ without coming through you, or that they are saved simply by waiting to speak to you.

An example for use with the unsaved child

“Do you really want to live for the Lord Jesus, but don’t know how to come to Him? I will be glad to explain it from the Bible; come and see me. I’ll be standing by that tree when the meeting is over. Remember, I can’t take away your sin - only the Lord Jesus can do that - but I will be glad to help you understand better how you can come to Him. Just come and sit with me under that tree.”

An example for use with the saved child

“If you have trusted the Lord Jesus as your Saviour and you have never told me about it, please let me know. I’ll be standing beside the piano after the meeting is finished. I would like to know if you too have trusted the Lord Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, so that I can pray for you and perhaps help you.”

Memory verses

A Scripture verse to teach the children is suggested for each lesson. If you are teaching the lessons as a series over five weeks it would be advisable to choose two or three verses to teach well, which the children will then remember. If you try to teach all five, the children may not really know any of them well.

Extra visual aids

On a piece of card print out the words of the central truth for each lesson; back it with flannel or pieces of flocked paper. (Use lower case letters, so that even the younger ones can read the words easily.) Put this card on the board at the beginning of the class or when you first teach the central truth in the lesson.

Additional helps

Along the left and right margins additional helps are provided, giving background information and optional ideas on how to add interest to your lesson.

These ideas are designed to incorporate different learning styles. For effective learning some children need to see or write, others need to hear or speak, others need to touch or handle, and still others need active participation.

You can use these ideas in your club as time allows.

Review questions

For each lesson some review questions are given. These can be used after the lesson or the following week, before teaching the new lesson.

Review time, if conducted in an orderly way, can be an ideal opportunity to reinforce what you have taught, while still being fun for the children. You can use this time ...

- 1 to find out how much the children are understanding and remembering.
- 2 to help you as a teacher to know what you need to emphasise more so that the children will remember better.
- 3 to provide a time of fun in the class. The children like competition and look forward to this part of the programme. But it is more than just a game: it is a time of learning.

In this textbook only questions on the lesson are included. It would be profitable to include questions also on the songs, verse and whatever else you teach. In this way the children realise that every part of the programme is important.

Overview

Lesson	Central truth	Application	Memory verse
Turned around Acts 9:1-22	Anyone in Christ is a new creation	Unsaved: You will be a new person, when Christ becomes your Lord and Saviour Saved: Do not give up hope for the salvation of the most unlikely person	“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new” 2 Corinthians 5:17
Plots and escapes Acts 9:20-30 Galatians 1:15-18 Acts 11:19-30 Acts 13:1-12	Every Christian who lives for God will suffer opposition	Saved: Remember what God says about suffering and don't let Satan stop you from following the Lord	“... All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” 2 Timothy 3:12
Mistaken identity Acts 14	People must hear the Gospel if they are going to be saved (based on Romans 1:16)	Unsaved: You have heard the Gospel, but you must believe Saved: Do all you can so that others hear the Gospel	“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes ...” Romans 1:16
The Gospel comes to Europe Acts 16	God brings all kinds of people into His family	Unsaved: You can be saved, no matter how unlikely you think it is Saved: You belong to His family; Christians are your brothers and sisters	“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” Galatians 3:26
Alone in Athens Acts 17	There is only one God and He is Creator, Ruler and Judge	Unsaved: You should worship, love and obey Him	“God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands” Acts 17:24

Lesson 1

Turned around

Scripture for teachers

Acts 9:1-22

Central truth

Anyone in Christ is a new creation

Application

Unsaved: You will be a new person, when Christ becomes your Lord and Saviour

Saved: Do not give up hope for the salvation of the most unlikely person

Memory verse

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new” 2 Corinthians 5:17

Visual aids

- ◆ Flashcards: 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5 and 1-6
- ◆ Map showing places Paul visited on his first missionary journey
- ◆ A strong, pointed stick

Lesson outline

Introduction

“How could a crucified nobody be the Messiah?”

Progression of events

- 1 Saul gets letters from the High Priest **CTU**
- 2 Saul travels to Damascus
- 3 Saul encounters risen Christ
 - “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” **CTU**
 - “Who are you, Lord?”
 - “I am Jesus”
 - “Lord, what do You want me to do?” **CTU**
 - “Go into Damascus”
- 4 Saul, now blind, is led into Damascus
- 5 Saul fasts and prays for three days **CTU**

Climax

- Ananias visits Saul **CT**
- Saul learns from disciples **CTS**

Conclusion

- Saul preaches Christ **CTU**

Lesson

Flashcard 1-1

“How could a crucified nobody be the Messiah? Jesus of Nazareth is dead and the sooner we get every follower of His behind bars, the better!”

Acts 8:3.

Show Jerusalem and Damascus on a map.

Saul, a young Pharisee, was very angry and against the people who believed in Jesus of Nazareth. He was furious that many Jews were joining them. He had already led soldiers to their homes in Jerusalem and had them arrested. He had made up his mind to take his campaign to Damascus, but needed permission from the High Priest, the most important religious leader, who worked in the temple.

“I need letters, giving me authority to arrest disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. We must stamp out this group. Many of our people are starting to turn to them.”

The High Priest gladly gave the documents. He must have been pleased to see Saul serving God so faithfully. Was Saul serving God? He thought he was. From childhood on he had learned the Old Testament. He knew the Jewish law inside out and tried to keep every detail. He said many prayers. He had been trained as a Pharisee, a religious leader, by Professor Gamaliel, the best teacher in Jerusalem. Yet, he was fighting against God and his thoughts about Jesus were totally wrong.

CTU

Based on Romans 5:10 and Colossians 1:21.

Like everyone else, Saul had been born an enemy of God. You and I were born enemies too. That is why you find it easy to do wrong - like when you tell lies, disobey your parents, steal, lose your temper. When you do those things, it is as if you shake your fist at God. You fight against Him, showing that you are His enemy. Being religious cannot change that, just as it did not change Saul. He was very religious, but he was fighting against God.

Flashcard 1-2

With letters giving permission to arrest the Christians, Saul set out on his journey to Damascus. He took several men with him. It was a 160 km (100 mile) journey, taking several days, even if they rode donkeys. At night they slept in roadside inns.

Acts 7:57-60.

The Bible doesn't tell us what Saul thought as he journeyed towards Damascus. We know that he was very angry against the Christians. He may have thought back to the day when he looked after the cloaks of the men who had stoned Stephen. Stephen's last speech and his final words, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin,” stayed with Saul. He could still see Stephen's shining face just before he died. These were unpleasant memories, which he could not shake off.

Damascus was in sight at last. It was, and still is, the oldest city in the world. If the followers of Jesus had heard of Saul's coming, they would be frightened for his name was known and feared.

Flashcard 1-3

Suddenly at midday, a light that was brighter than the sun shone on the group of travellers.

Saul fell to the ground. Only he saw Someone and heard the Person speak. These are the very words he heard.

“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:4b.)

Who was speaking? Yes, it was Jesus Christ. Saul saw the risen Lord Jesus, like He is now in Heaven. What a shock it was! Saul had thought he was serving God, but he had been persecuting the Messiah. He was indeed an enemy of God. Have you ever seen yourself as an enemy of God? You don't hurt Christians like Saul did, but you were born God's enemy. Every time you do the things He hates, you fight against Him. Reading the Bible, saying prayers or being kind does not change you. God's enemies must be punished. God's enemies will be punished for ever and ever after they die. You must realise what you really are, and how God sees you. Saul was beginning to understand. His answer to the Lord Jesus shows that.

“Who are You, Lord?” (Acts 9:5a.)

The Lord Jesus replied, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads” (Acts 9:5b).

A goad was a spiked stick, used to make oxen work harder.

Saul was trembling and amazed. Listen to his next question.

“Lord, what do You want me to do?” (Acts 9:6a.)

Again Saul called Jesus “Lord” and he was willing to take orders from Him. What a turn around! Saul had set out to arrest the followers of Jesus Christ, but Jesus Christ arrested him! It is only Jesus Christ Who can change God's enemies into people who want to love and obey God. Jesus Christ is just as alive today, as on the day Saul met Him on the Damascus road. He did die on the cross - He died to make God's enemies, God's friends. “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:13). He did not stay dead, as Saul saw for himself. He can turn you around. He can change you on the inside, so that you want to love and obey God. This is what was happening to Saul. He was taking orders from the One he had hated.

“Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do,” was the Lord's instruction (Acts 9:6b).

Acts 26:13.

Ask preschoolers how they would react to a light like that.

Read (or have a child read) the verse from your Bible.

CTU

Read (or have a child read) the verses from your Bible.

If possible show a strong, pointed stick and remind the children that the Lord had already “prodded” Saul, eg through Stephen.

CTU

Read (or have a child read) the verse from your Bible.

Flashcard 1-4

Saul got to his feet and looked around, but he could see nothing. He was blind. The other men were amazed and puzzled, not understanding what had happened. They took the once proud leader of the “Anti-Jesus Campaign” by the hand and led him into Damascus. They left him in a house in Straight Street, where he spent three days alone. He did not eat or drink, he thought and prayed. He had been wrong, so very wrong. He was sorry, so very sorry. His meeting with the living Lord had brought about this change. Jesus was the Messiah, Saul’s Saviour, Saul’s Lord. Saul was a “new creation”. Who had changed him? Jesus Christ.

Read (or have a child read) 2 Corinthians 5:17 from your Bible.

CTU

Only Jesus Christ can change you. Do you understand that you are an enemy of God? Are you sorry? If so, the Lord Jesus has already “stopped you in your tracks”, although you do not see Him. If you believe that He died for **you** and that He alone is **your** Saviour and Lord, you are “in Christ”, you are a “new creation” - just like Saul. He looked just the same as before, but was a very, very different man.

Flashcard 1-5

Saul heard someone enter the house in Straight Street. It was Ananias, one of the Damascus believers in Jesus Christ. He had been very surprised when the Lord Jesus had instructed him, “Go to Straight Street. A man Saul of Tarsus is staying there” (from Acts 9:12).

Ananias had heard of Saul, and he was the last person he wanted to visit! The Lord made it plain that He saw things somewhat differently.

Read (or have a child read) Acts 9:15-16 from your Bible.

Listen again and tell me three groups of people to whom Saul would be speaking about the Lord Jesus. Gentiles (non-Jews), Kings and Jews. Ananias obeyed His Lord and went to Saul.

“Brother Saul,” he said as he placed his hands on him.

Why did he call him “brother”?

Allow children to participate.

CT

Saul was a new creation - he was in God’s family, just like Ananias. If you really want God to make you a new person too, but you are not sure how it can happen to you, I will be very happy to explain more from the Bible. Stay behind when everyone else leaves and I will know you want to talk. It is wonderful to be made a “new creation” like Saul.

Ananias had something important to say to him.

Ask children how they would have felt if they were Ananias.

“Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 9:17).

Immediately Saul could see! The Holy Spirit took charge of him too. At once he got up and was baptised, to show that he now belonged to Jesus Christ.

Flashcard 1-6

Probably it was Ananias who introduced him to the disciples in Damascus. Can you imagine their surprise - Saul, who had been so against them, was now one of them! It was hard to believe!

Perhaps, Christian boy or girl, you have a friend, or there is someone in your family, whom you think will never be saved. Look at what happened to Saul. Don't give up hope, keep on praying.

Saul must have learned quite a lot from the disciples in Damascus. He already knew the Old Testament very well and, now that he understood that Jesus was the Messiah, he understood it far better. He could not keep his discovery to himself. He had to tell others about Jesus Christ. He went out preaching that Jesus was the One God had promised to send, the Messiah.

What a change! This was the man who had hated anything to do with Jesus Christ. Now he loved Him, obeyed Him and persuaded others to believe too. He was a “new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Has that happened to you? Only the Lord Jesus can make you a new person. Don't you see that you have been God's enemy? Are you truly sorry? Believe that the Lord Jesus died for your sins. Trust Him as your Saviour and Lord. That is what Saul did. The Lord Jesus made him a “new creation” and He can do the same for you.

Review questions

- 1 What did Saul ask from the High Priest? (Letters, giving him permission to arrest Christians in Damascus.)
- 2 What made Saul an enemy of God? (He was born a sinner.)
- 3 Who did Saul meet on the Damascus Road? (The Lord Jesus Christ.)
- 4 What did the Lord say Saul had been doing? (Persecuting Him.)
- 5 What did Saul call Jesus when he met Him? (Lord.)
- 6 Why did Saul have to be led into Damascus? (He was blind.)
- 7 If you are in Christ, what are you? (A new creation.)
- 8 What did Saul do for three days? (Prayed.)
- 9 Why was Ananias afraid when the Lord told him to visit Saul? (Ananias knew that Saul persecuted Christians.)

Briefly explain baptism, if your children are unfamiliar with it.

CTS

CTU

Review game

Build the city

Make cards with the following letter formations:

JE RU SA L EM
D AM AS C US

Place them face down on a table.

Divide the children into two teams - the Jerusalem team and the Damascus team.

The objective of each team is to build its city's name.

When a team member answers a question correctly, he chooses a card. If it is needed to build his city's name, he keeps it for his team, if not, it is placed back with the other cards.

The team with the name completed first, wins the competition.

- 10 Why did Ananias call Saul "brother"? (Saul was now a Christian and in God's family.)
- 11 Who can make you a new person? (Jesus Christ.)
- 12 How did the Jews in Damascus know about the change in Saul? (Saul went and preached.)

Lesson 2

Plots and escapes

Scripture for teachers

Acts 9:20-30
Galatians 1:15-18
Acts 11:19-30
Acts 13:1-12

Central truth

Every Christian who lives for God will suffer opposition

Application

Saved: Remember what God says about suffering and don't let Satan stop you from following the Lord

Memory verse

"... All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" 2 Timothy 3:12

Visual aids

- ◆ Flashcards: 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5 and 2-6
- ◆ Map showing places Paul visited on his first missionary journey
- ◆ Big basket or box (large enough for a small child to fit inside)

Lesson outline

Introduction

Who wrote thirteen books of the Bible?

Progression of events

- 1 God teaches Saul in Arabia
- 2 Saul returns to Damascus
- 3 Jews plot against him **CT**
- 4 Believers organise Saul's escape **CTS**
- 5 He joins believers in Jerusalem
- 6 They reject him **CTS**
- 7 Barnabas stands with Paul
- 8 Paul escapes from Jerusalem and goes to Tarsus **CTS**
- 9 Barnabas joins him and they go to Antioch
- 10 Church at Antioch sends them out
- 11 They preach in Cyprus
- 12 Elymas opposes them

Climax

Elymas is blinded

Conclusion

The governor believes in Christ **CTS**

Indicate on map.

Lesson

At least thirteen books in the Bible were written by one man! Does anyone know who? It was Saul - the man we learned about last time.

When the Lord Jesus met Saul and saved him, He had plans for Saul's life. We left him preaching about the Lord Jesus to the surprised Jews in Damascus. This did not last long, for God told Saul to go to Arabia.

What do you think happened there?

Allow children to guess.

Saul did not preach, he did not meet with people. He was alone, just he and God. God taught him many of the things which he later wrote in his thirteen books of the Bible. God prepared him for a busy, often dangerous, life ahead.

Flashcard 2-1

When Saul returned to Damascus he began to preach. He could not keep quiet about the Lord Jesus whom he loved so much. As the Jews listened to Saul preaching in the synagogues, many became angry. They hated Saul and they hated what he preached. They saw Saul as a traitor, or "turncoat", and soon they were plotting to kill him. Day and night Saul's enemies kept careful watch in the city, determined that he would not escape. They would get their man.

Life was not easy for Saul. Probably he was not surprised by the opposition. Do you remember how God had told Ananias, "I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:16)? Every person who is made a new creation by the Lord Jesus will have opposition. Later God used Saul to write these words which are in the Bible, "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). Satan, God's enemy, tries to wreck God's work. When the Lord Jesus makes someone a "new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17), Satan makes life difficult for that person. When Christians tell the Gospel to others, Satan works against them for he certainly does not want more people to be saved. The devil often uses people to do his work, just as he used the Jews in Damascus.

CT

The believers got to hear about the plot to kill Saul. One night they took action.

"Brother Saul," they may have said, "the Jews are going to kill you. It is too dangerous for you to stay in Damascus. We will help you to escape. Come."

Flashcard 2-2

He went with them to a quiet section of the city wall. The believers had a huge basket and told Saul to get into it.

Carefully and quietly they lowered it over the wall. There was a gentle thud as it touched the ground. Quickly Saul clambered out and hurried away. God had made sure the escape plan succeeded. Whatever the Jews did, God was in charge!

This is something that every person who knows and loves the Lord Jesus should remember. When you suffer for being a Christian, God is in control. Perhaps no-one in your class will speak to you, except to call you names. You are on your own at break and lunch time. It is very difficult, but God is still in charge and nothing can separate you from Him. He was with Saul as he fled from Damascus.

Saul travelled for several days, looking forward to meeting up with the believers in Jerusalem. He belonged to the same family, God's family. It would be so good to be together.

Flashcard 2-3

Once in Jerusalem, he hurried to meet the believers.

"Brothers, I want to be with you, I will preach about Jesus Christ too," he must have enthused.

But the believers did not want him. They were afraid of him. Can you think why?

Allow children to participate.

I am sure Satan was delighted, he always is when other Christians make it hard for someone to follow the Lord.

Sandra was eight when she trusted the Lord Jesus as her Saviour. She loved Him and wanted to obey Him. One Sunday she plucked up the courage to tell her Sunday School teacher, Mrs. Campbell, that she was a Christian. Mrs. Campbell just said, "That's nice." Later Sandra overheard Mrs. Campbell say to another teacher, "I think she's too young to know what she's doing." Sandra was really sad. Was she too young? How would you encourage her?

As Christians we should never be part of Satan's plan to give Christians a hard time.

In Jerusalem Satan did not have his way for very long. A disciple, called Barnabas, knew about Saul.

"Look," he explained to the others, "our Lord Jesus met Saul and talked to him on the Damascus road. He has completely changed him. Saul is one of us, he has already preached about the Lord Jesus in Damascus."

That is how Christians should help one another and defeat the devil's schemes! The disciples welcomed their brother Saul and before long he "spoke boldly in the name of the Lord" in Jerusalem (Acts 9:29). Soon Saul faced the same problem as in Damascus - the hatred of

If you have a big basket or box, you may allow a younger child to get into it.

CTS

Give children the opportunity to share the problems they may have faced as Christians.

CTS

Allow children to make suggestions and point out that God says, "Whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16b).

the Jews and a plot to kill him. They seem to have hated him more than any of the other disciples. Can you think why?

Allow the children to answer.

Flashcard 2-4

Indicate on map.

God made sure that the believers heard about the Jews' plot. They hurried Saul out of the city to a seaport called Caesarea. From there Saul sailed to Tarsus, his home town. God still had work for Saul to do. That is why the Jewish plot failed.

CTS

Christian boy and girl, Satan can do to you only what God allows. God allows some of His children to suffer far more than others. We do not know why, but He has His own good reasons. You could have two brothers, both saved, at the same school. One may have a Christian friend and not have any problems with people laughing at him. The other may be mocked, laughed at and even kicked, just because he lives for God. We do not understand why this happens.

Saul came to the point where he saw that it was a privilege to suffer for the Lord Jesus. It is good to think of it like that.

Saul seems to have had a break from plots to kill him in Tarsus. This is where he had been brought up and no doubt he contacted some of his old friends and told them the Gospel. Saul knew that people could never be saved without hearing the Gospel and it made him very sad to think of people being lost and separated from God for ever.

Flashcard 2-5

One day he had a surprise visitor, Barnabas. What do you remember about him?

Let children participate.

Acts 4:36.

“Barnabas” means “son of encouragement” and that is just what he was!

Indicate on map.

“Brother Saul,” said Barnabas, “there are many believers now in Antioch. They need to be taught so that they become strong in the faith. I need your help. Will you come to Antioch with me?”

Saul went with Barnabas and served God in Antioch. The believers there had a nickname and it was one that stuck - Christians! The believers in Jesus Christ were first called “Christians” in Antioch.

After some time God the Holy Spirit gave special instructions to the church, the group of believers in Antioch. We have it here in the Bible.

Read (or have a child read) the verse from your Bible.

“Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (Acts 13:2b).

Although they must have been sorry to lose them, the Christians in Antioch obeyed and sent Saul and Barnabas to bring the Gospel to other places.

The two men sailed to Cyprus, which was where Barnabas came from. Today it is a popular holiday destination, but the two missionaries were not on holiday - they were busy preaching the Gospel all over the island. What do you think they told the people?

Use this as an opportunity to present the Gospel briefly and simply.

From now on we will call Saul Paul, because in the Bible this name is used. Paul is the Greek version of Saul.

At the last place Paul and Barnabas visited on the island they received a message, "The Governor wants to hear what you have to say."

Paul and Barnabas must have been delighted that the governor (or proconsul) of the island was interested in the Gospel.

Flashcard 2-6

God's enemy, Satan, was determined to stop the governor from hearing and believing the Gospel. He had his man right beside the governor. His name was Elymas, a Jew. He was a magician, a sort of fortune teller, and was an advisor to the governor. Elymas kept interrupting.

Paul, knowing that Satan was using Elymas, stopped. He stared at Elymas. I will read from the Bible what Paul said.

Read Acts 13:10-11a from your Bible.

"O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time."

Elymas was struck blind and he had to call out for someone to lead him.

The governor was amazed. He listened to what Paul taught. He thought of the power of God that he had just seen. He believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. The governor of Cyprus was a "new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Satan's opposition had been defeated; God had done what He had planned.

It is always like that when Satan tries to stop God's plans. God cannot be defeated. When you live for God, expect Satan to make life difficult for you. When you try to tell someone about the Lord, Satan is against you. Every Christian faces this.

Do not give up, because Satan cannot defeat God. God is in control. He will do as He pleases. Ask God to help you to see that it is indeed a privilege to suffer for the Lord, the One Who suffered far

Show on map.

Acts 4:36.

The Bible does not tell us what either Paul or Elymas said, perhaps it was like this.

(Teacher takes the part of Paul and a helper interrupts.)

Paul: "Governor of Cyprus, we want to tell you about the Son of God."

Elymas: "This is indeed foolish talk - in all my days I never heard of the Son of God."

P: "God sent His Son into the world. His name is Jesus Christ."

CTS

E: "Nonsense, your highness, you surely have more important matters to see to."

P: "The Son of God lived a perfect life, then He

died on the cross.”

E: “Never! Only criminals die like that. You, as a Roman, know that governor.”

P: “He did not stay in ...”

E: “Nobody with any intelligence could believe this.”

Review game

Which route?

Photocopy/enlarge the map on page 39 onto an A3 sheet.

Use the map to plot Paul’s journey after his return to Damascus.

One team uses a red marker or pencil, the other a blue one.

The aim is to reach Cyprus first, following the route Paul took.

When a child answers a question, he marks the route to the next place.

The team which reaches Cyprus by the correct route wins.

If both teams take the correct route, the team to reach Cyprus first wins.

(The correct route is: Damascus - Jerusalem - Caesarea - Tarsus - Antioch - Cyprus.)

more for you as He died on the cross. Paul wrote in the book of Romans (in the Bible) that the hard times we have here are nothing compared with what it will be like to be in Heaven with the Lord (Romans 8:18)!

Review questions

- 1 Why did God send Saul to Arabia? (To teach him many things and prepare him for the life ahead.)
- 2 Why did Saul have to escape from Damascus? (The Jews plotted to kill him.)
- 3 How did Saul escape from Damascus? (In a basket over the wall.)
- 4 Why do Christians often have a hard time? (Satan is against God’s work.)
- 5 What shock did Saul get when he met the believers in Jerusalem? (They were afraid of him.)
- 6 Who helped them to understand that Saul was their brother? (Barnabas.)
- 7 What were the believers called in Antioch? (Christians.)
- 8 Who told the church in Antioch to send Saul and Barnabas out as missionaries? (The Holy Spirit.)
- 9 Who did Satan use in Cyprus to try to stop God’s work? (Elymas.)
- 10 What happened to Elymas? (He became blind.)
- 11 What happened to the governor of Cyprus? (He believed.)
- 12 How could you encourage a friend who has a hard time because of being a Christian. (God is in charge; it is a privilege to suffer for the Lord.)

Lesson 3

Mistaken identity

Scripture for teachers

Acts 14

Central truth

People must hear the Gospel if they are going to be saved (based on Romans 1:16)

Application

Unsaved: You have heard the Gospel, but you must believe

Saved: Do all you can so that others hear the Gospel

Memory verse

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes ...” Romans 1:16

Visual aids

- ◆ Flashcards: 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4, 3-5 and 3-6
- ◆ Map showing places Paul visited on his first missionary journey

Lesson outline

Introduction

Do you like hill climbing?

Progression of events

- 1 Paul travels over rough terrain, preaching **CT**
- 2 Paul and Barnabas preach in Lystra
- 3 Lame man believes
- 5 Paul - “Stand up”
- 6 The man stands up
- 7 Crowd tries to worship Paul and Barnabas **CT**
- 8 Priest about to bring sacrifices
- 9 Crowd calmed **CTS**
- 10 Opponents infiltrate the people **CTU**

Climax

Paul is stoned and thought to be dead

Conclusion

Left outside the city

Gets up and spends night in Lystra

Returns to Antioch

CTU, CTS

Indicate route on map.

Lesson

Do you like hill climbing? That is what Paul and Barnabas had to do when they sailed away from Cyprus and landed on the mainland. They trekked about 160 km (100 miles) north and about 1100 metres (3600 feet) up! It was rugged, dangerous countryside with bands of robbers waiting to attack. Paul and Barnabas visited several cities and preached about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Flashcard 3-1

The people who lived in the cities, like the people of Cyprus, had a religion. They believed in many gods. The chief god was Zeus (the Romans called him Jupiter). Another was Hermes (Mercury) who had wings on his feet and could fly very swiftly. He was also supposed to be a good speaker.

Many had heard a legend about Zeus and Hermes. They were said to have visited that part of the world, apparently as two men. The people did not recognise them and would not invite them to their homes. One poor couple, however, invited them to their humble cottage. The poor couple were rewarded for their kindness, but the gods sent floods to punish the rest of the people.

We know this is a legend, but many of the people believed it. Beautiful temples had been built for the worship of the Greek gods. These people had never before heard the Gospel. Do you think that God - the one true God - would accept them because they had some religion?

CT

Discuss with children.

The Lord Jesus made it clear that He is the only One Who can bring people to God (John 14:6). If people have not heard of Jesus Christ, they cannot trust Him and they cannot be in God's family. That is why Paul gladly faced the dangers of travelling. He had to tell people the Gospel.

Indicate on map.

Eventually they reached the town of Lystra. Out in front of it was a beautiful building - a temple to their god, Zeus. Paul and Barnabas started to tell people about the Lord Jesus. Sometimes they preached about Him and sometimes they just chatted about Him.

Flashcard 3-2

Sitting on the street, among those who listened, was a man who had never been able to run about and play like other boys. There was something seriously wrong with his feet, it had always been that way. This man listened very carefully to what Paul was saying. In his heart he believed in Jesus Christ as **his** Lord and Saviour. Paul had been watching him and something in the man's face showed Paul that he had believed. Suddenly Paul looked right at the man and spoke in a very loud voice.

“Stand up straight on your feet!”

Let's read in the Bible what happened next - listen.

Flashcard 3-3

Read Acts 14:10b from your Bible.

“He leaped and walked.”

It was a miracle. Would not all the people there believe in the Lord Jesus, because they had seen a miracle?

The crowd became very excited and spoke in their own language.

“It's happening again - just like in the legend.”

“The gods have come back.”

“The one who talks must be Hermes.”

“The other is Zeus.”

“We never thought we'd see it happen.”

“We'll not make the mistake they made long ago.”

“Let's worship Zeus and Hermes.”

“Yes, worship Zeus and Hermes.”

There was not a word about the one true God. No-one spoke about the Lord Jesus. They were all totally confused. You see, miracles do not of themselves lead people to believe in the Lord Jesus. In the Bible it is clear that the Gospel is what leads people to believe in Him. Listen.

Read Romans 1:16 from your Bible.

It is the Gospel which is the power of God to salvation. People need to know that they are sinners and separated from God. They need to hear that God's Son, Jesus Christ, can bring them to God, because He died for sin and rose again. People must hear the Gospel - this is far, far more important than seeing a miracle. The miracle of the healed man caused great excitement, but not faith in the Lord Jesus.

Flashcard 3-4

At first Paul and Barnabas may not have understood what was happening, because they did not understand the local language. But soon they saw something which horrified them.

The priest of Zeus came towards them bringing oxen and garlands of flowers. It was obvious he was going to sacrifice the animals to Paul and Barnabas - just as he did in the temple of Zeus. The people were kneeling in front of Paul and Barnabas. The two missionaries were very, very upset. They tore their clothes to show their distress. They ran out among the people and tried to stop them.

CT

“We are not gods - we have come to you with the message that you must turn away from these idols to the living God, Who made Heaven and Earth and all living things.”

Finally they were able to get the people stopped. I am sure they went on explaining the Gospel to the people. It was clearer to them than ever before just how important it was that the people should hear and understand about God’s way of salvation.

CTS

Every Christian has a responsibility to make sure that people hear and understand the Gospel. Perhaps there are people in your family who need to hear, or in your class at school, or in your street. What can you do to make sure they hear the Gospel?

Discuss different, realistic ideas with the children - eg give a tract, explain the Wordless Book, tell how you became a Christian, encourage people to read the Bible, invite a child to Good News Club®.

It is the Gospel which God has planned to use to bring people to Himself. Not everyone who hears the Gospel will be saved, but people who are saved have all heard the Gospel. That is why Paul was explaining it to the people of Lystra.

Flashcard 3-5

But there were enemies in the city. Jewish leaders had followed Paul and Barnabas from other cities where they had preached and they were out to make trouble. They began to spread lies about Paul and Barnabas. The very same people who had tried to worship the two men soon turned against them. They had heard the Gospel, but for most of them it made no difference.

CTU

Read (or have a child read) the verse from your Bible.

It is the same today, many people hear the Gospel, but it makes no difference. Let’s listen to Romans 1:16 again. Can you figure out why many people hear the Gospel and are not saved?

Listen to children’s answers.

They do not believe! People cannot believe unless they hear. But they are not saved unless they believe. Everyone here today has heard the Gospel, not everyone has believed.

Perhaps you have seen a rope bridge across a deep ravine. Supposing a man says, “I have been over the bridge many times. I have carried people over.” You see him carry some across and you know he can do it. He says to you, “I’ll take you over.” If you trust him, what will you do? You will put yourself in his care and depend on him to do it. That is what you must do with the Gospel. You must entrust yourself to Jesus Christ to save you from sin. The Gospel is the power of God for salvation, to all who believe (Romans 1:16). Will you believe? Don’t be like the people of Lystra, who turned against the Gospel and the missionaries.

The Jews who had come to the city got a mob together - the idea was to kill Paul. The angry mob, the same people who had tried to worship him, caught Paul and threw huge stones at him. Paul collapsed and the mob thought he was dead. Roughly they dragged his body out of the city and dumped him.

Some people of Lystra had believed the Gospel and they went out of the city to find Paul. They must have been very sad when they saw him, battered and bruised and lying so still. They must have prayed as they gathered around Paul.

Flashcard 3-6

Suddenly he opened his eyes, moved and got up! His work for the Lord was not finished. Although bruised and very sore, he returned to Lystra where he stayed overnight.

He must have had many aches and pains as he travelled with Barnabas on to Derbe the next day. What do you think they did in Derbe? They preached the Gospel as they always did and many people believed.

After that they returned to all the places where they had preached before going back to Antioch. When they met the believers there they had so much to tell. Gentiles as well as Jews had believed the Gospel. Do you remember how God had told Ananias that Paul would bring the Gospel to Gentiles, Jews and kings?

Wherever Paul went he spoke about Jesus Christ. He did not tell his own life story, he did not tell his ideas, he told the Gospel. He knew that is what people must hear, if they are to be saved.

If you are not saved, remember the Gospel is God's power for salvation only for those who believe. Think of the rope bridge. Standing there and telling the man that you know he could take you over, will not get you across. You must trust him. Saying you believe the Gospel will not save you, you must entrust yourself to Jesus Christ to save you.

Read Romans 1:16 from your Bible.

Christian boy or girl, if someone asked you, "What's a Christian?" How would you answer?

You may wish to use the following to develop this further. A helper and an older child could show how to witness at home and at school.

Perhaps you really want to share the Gospel, but you don't know how - let's imagine these two situations.

- ◆ At home: Mother could say, "I don't understand why it is so important to you to read the Bible."

Child explains why.

Indicate on map.

Show return route on map.

Acts 9:15.

CTU

CTS

Review game

Is it part of the Gospel?

Copy the statements on pages 40-41, cut them apart and place in an envelope.

Divide children into two teams.

When a child answers a question correctly, he receives ten points and he chooses a piece of paper from the envelope.

The statement is read out aloud. If it is part of the Gospel, his team gets an additional ten points.

Do not return the statement to the envelope!

Part of the Gospel

- ♦ Sin displeases God.
- ♦ Jesus Christ died on the cross.
- ♦ God must punish all sin.
- ♦ Jesus Christ is alive for ever.
- ♦ Turn from sin to the Lord.
- ♦ Trust Jesus Christ to save you.
- ♦ All people are sinners.
- ♦ Jesus is the only way to God.
- ♦ Jesus Christ is God's only Son.
- ♦ Jesus Christ was punished for our sin.

Not part of the Gospel

- ♦ Everyone needs a friend.
- ♦ Peace is a great feeling.
- ♦ Any religion will do.
- ♦ It's important to be happy.
- ♦ Try to be good.
- ♦ If you go to church you're OK.

- ♦ At school: A friend suggests, "Copy my homework and you won't get into trouble."

Christian child says, "I'd rather not."

Friend asks, "Why?"

Christian child explains about being a Christian.

Review questions

- 1 Why did Paul bother going through dangerous territory? (To tell people about the Lord Jesus.)
- 2 What did Paul see when he looked at the man who could not walk? (He saw that the man had faith.)
- 3 What did Paul say to the man? ("Stand up.")
- 4 Who healed the man? (The Lord.)
- 5 What did the crowds in Lystra think? (That Paul and Barnabas were gods.)
- 6 Which of the following is correct? If people are going to be saved, they must ... see miracles; hear the Gospel; or go to church. (Hear the Gospel.)
- 7 What did the priest of Zeus do? (He brought oxen and wreaths of flowers to make sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas.)
- 8 Why did the crowd start to stone Paul? (Strangers, Jews, came to Lystra and told lies about them.)
- 9 Why did they dump him outside the city? (They thought he was dead.)
- 10 What can you do to make sure people hear the Gospel? (Answers will vary. For example, give a tract, explain the Wordless Book, tell how you became a Christian, encourage people to read the Bible, invite a child to Good News Club, etc.)
- 11 What happened when the believers gathered around Paul? (He got up.)
- 12 Why didn't Paul stop preaching after such rough treatment? (He knew that people must hear the Gospel, if they are to be saved.)

Lesson 4

The Gospel comes to Europe

Scripture for teachers

Acts 16

Central truth

God brings all kinds of people into His family

Application

Unsaved: You can be saved, no matter how unlikely you think it is

Saved: You belong to His family; Christians are your brothers and sisters

Memory verse

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” Galatians 3:26

Visual aids

- ◆ Flashcards: 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4, 4-5 and 4-6
- ◆ Map showing places Paul visited on his second missionary journey

Lesson outline

Introduction

Nothing works out for Tristan

Progression of events

- 1 Paul's vision
- 2 Paul's second missionary journey begins with a trip to Philippi
- 3 God opens Lydia's heart **CTU**
- 4 Slave girl follows missionaries
- 5 Slave girl is delivered **CTS**
- 6 Paul and Silas are imprisoned
- 7 Earthquake
- 8 Jailer - “What must I do ...”
- 9 Paul - “Believe on the Lord Jesus ...”

Climax

Jailer is converted **CTU, CTS**

Conclusion

Paul insists on being escorted out of prison

Missionaries say goodbye **CTU, CTS**

Lesson

“Nothing worked out for me this week,” announced Tristan. “I fell off my bike, I lost my penknife, the teacher blamed me in the wrong, and my kid sister spilled juice on my homework.”

Have you ever had a bad week like that?

It was rather like that for Paul. He was setting out on his second missionary journey. He wanted to get somewhere. He tried to go one direction, but was stopped. He wanted to go another, but God said, “No.” It did not make sense, until one night.

Flashcard 4-1

Paul had a vision, a sort of dream. In it he saw a European man, the man was begging him to do something.

Read the man’s words from the Bible - Acts 16:9b.

“Come over to Macedonia and help us.”

Paul knew exactly what it was about.

Read Acts 16:10 from your Bible.

God had shown him that he was to go to Macedonia to preach the Gospel. Paul and his helpers set sail. His second missionary journey had begun. The first town they stopped in was Philippi.

Indicate route on map.

Usually Paul went to the synagogue to tell the Gospel to people who worshipped God there. But there was no synagogue in Philippi, probably because there were very few people who worshipped God.

Flashcard 4-2

The missionaries discovered, however, a group of women who met to pray by the river. They joined them and sat down, waiting to be invited to speak. What do you think Paul talked about, when invited to speak? Of course he told them about Jesus Christ and what He had done.

The little group listened carefully. One was especially attentive. Her name was Lydia. She was a wealthy business woman from across the sea. She sold very expensive purple cloth. She already believed in God, just as the Jews did. As she listened, something happened. Listen as I read it from the Bible, then tell me what happened and what it means.

Read Acts 16:14.

What happened?

“The Lord opened her heart.”

What does that mean? God did a miracle so that she understood the Gospel and believed in the Lord Jesus. That is what happens when a person is saved - God does a miracle so that the person

CTU

understands the Gospel and trusts Jesus Christ. God does that for all kinds of people. Missionary Paul was very different from Lydia, but God did the same miracle in both. You need that miracle too. Your heart and life are shut to God until He changes you. But He can do that! You are very different from Lydia or Paul, but God saves all kinds of people and they are all His children.

Paul was thrilled to see what God was doing. Others in Lydia's house believed too. Perhaps they were servants or children. Her home became the meeting place for Christians and the missionaries stayed there. These people belonged together. They had the same Father, the same Saviour. They were brothers and sisters.

Things seemed to go well, but soon there was trouble.

Flashcard 4-3

One day as the missionaries went to pray with other believers, there was loud shouting in the street. It came from a young woman who probably stood in their way. This young woman had an evil spirit, from Satan, who gave her the power to tell the future. She was a fortune teller, who brought a lot of money in for her masters.

Point out to children that fortune telling, including horoscopes, is against God's Word. See Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

Paul and his friends passed her, but she followed them screaming, "Those men are servants of the most High God. They are telling you the way to be saved!"

For many days the girl's shouts could be heard everywhere the missionaries went. Paul felt very, very sad that the evil spirit controlled the girl. He was angry about the way Satan used her to draw attention to them.

One day sadness and anger made him stop, turn around and speak.

"In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!"

Immediately the evil spirit left her. She was free and we can be almost sure that she too became a believer in the Lord Jesus.

This was another miracle. She could never have freed herself, but the Lord Jesus Christ did it. God saves all kinds of people - she was very different from Lydia. In what ways?

Allow the children to compare the two women.

In the Bible we read that God saves different types of people, bringing them into His family.

Read Galatians 3:26,28 from your Bible.

They become brothers and sisters who love one another. This is a wonderful amazing thing about being saved. If you are God's child, you are my brother or sister. You belong to a family that stretches

CTS

around the world. It's important that you meet together with those who are in God's family. You do that when you go to church or come to club. Try to go to the Christian group at school if there is one. Christians should be together, loving each other and helping each other. We may be very different from each other, but we belong together, just as the Christians in Philippi.

Flashcard 4-4

The owners of the slave girl were furious. The evil spirit had gone out of her and their hope of making money had gone too. Things became really nasty. These angry men grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them into the centre of the town. The magistrates listened to the charge against them.

Read Acts 16:20-21 from your Bible.

The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas and the magistrate ordered, "Strip them and beat them!"

Probably this was Paul's first flogging and it was really painful. Next they were thrown into prison and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. They were brought to the "top security" inner cell and put in stocks. It was a horrible place to be. They were bleeding and sore. How would you have felt if you had been there? What would you have said?

Allow children to imagine themselves in this situation.

Is that how Paul and Silas felt? We find out in the Bible.

Read Acts 16:25 from your Bible.

How could they sing when things were so difficult? They knew that God was with them, whatever happened. They knew that God had a purpose for them being in prison. So they sang and the other prisoners listened.

Flashcard 4-5

Suddenly there was pandemonium. The prison shook, the doors flew open, the chains fell off the prisoners. It was an earthquake! What would all the prisoners do? You would expect them to run away. That was the jailer's first thought when he awoke. His second thought was what would happen to him - surely execution. That was a scary thought. The jailer decided that he would rather end his own life, so he drew his sword.

"Don't harm yourself, we are all here!" shouted Paul.

Paul knew that God had a plan in all of this.

"Bring me lights!" called the jailer.

He was trembling as he rushed towards Paul and Silas.

He brought them out and asked, “What must I do to be saved?”

Another miracle! God had used the missionaries imprisonment and the earthquake to make this jailer think about the most important thing in life - to be saved.

Paul answered immediately, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.”

He and Silas explained to the jailer and his family what it meant to be saved. He must have told him that he must depend on Jesus Christ to rescue him from sin and its punishment. He would have explained about Jesus Christ being God’s only Son and His dying for sinners. The jailer was told that the Lord Jesus came back to life and so he could trust Him. If he did, he would be saved. The jailer and his family believed and were saved.

The group of new Christians in Philippi were a very “mixed bunch”. The jailer was totally different from Lydia, or the fortune teller, or indeed from Paul. But God saved them all and they would have met together to worship God.

Perhaps you have felt, “God won’t save me because no-one likes me,” or “It’s not for me. I’m a bully, a trouble maker and I smoke.” Those differences make no difference to God. He can save you and you will belong to the group of Christians who are all in God’s family. Christians meet together to worship God on Sunday. It is good that you do that, if your parents allow it. If you would like to ask me more about this, come to me after club.

The jailer soon looked after Paul and Silas. He brought them home, bathed their wounds and gave them a meal. It says in the Bible that he was filled with joy. Can you tell me why?

Allow children time to discuss this point.

The rejoicing must have lasted well into the night.

Flashcard 4-6

Next morning those who had been responsible for imprisoning Paul and Silas sent messengers to the prison.

“Release the two men.”

They hoped they had learned their lesson and would leave the prison quietly.

But Paul firmly said, “No! They beat us up publicly without trial, even though we are Roman citizens. Now they want to push us out quietly.”

It was illegal to beat and imprison a Roman citizen like that.

“Let them come themselves,” continued Paul, “they must escort us out of prison.”

CTU

CTS

When the messengers brought this response back to their masters there was great alarm. They knew they were in the wrong so they went to the prison to apologise and to escort Paul and Silas out of prison.

Before leaving the city the two missionaries made a last visit. Can you guess to whom? They went to say goodbye to the believers in Lydia's house. Who did they see there? Yes, probably the jailer and his family, Lydia and her family and servants, the slave girl and others. They were all very different people who would not normally have met together. Having been converted they were all one in Christ Jesus. They belonged to Him and they belonged to each other.

CTU

It is wonderful that God saves all kinds of people. Has He saved you? If not then, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). If you are a Christian you belong to God's family which stretches around the world. Make sure you meet together with others who are in God's family.

CTS

Paul and Silas left Philippi. It had been a difficult visit, but well worthwhile. It had all been in God's plan!

Review game

The pea game

Have a dessertspoon and a bowl of dried peas on the floor approx 3 metres away from an empty bowl on a table.

Divide children into two teams.

When a child answers correctly for his team, he takes a spoonful of dried peas and empties it into the empty bowl.

The number of peas he manages to get into the bowl is the score he gets for his team.

You may take off a point for every pea dropped.

Review questions

- 1 How did Paul know he should go to Philippi? (God showed him in a vision.)
- 2 Where in Philippi did he find people who worshipped God? (By the river.)
- 3 Whose heart did the Lord open? (Lydia's.)
- 4 Why could the slave girl foretell the future? (An evil spirit lived in her.)
- 5 Why did the evil spirit leave her? (It had to obey a command given in the name of Jesus Christ.)
- 6 How did Lydia and the slave girl become "related" to each other? (They became sisters in God's family.)
- 7 Why could Paul and Silas sing in prison? (They knew God was with them and He had a plan which He was working out.)
- 8 What question did the jailer ask Paul and Silas? ("What must I do to be saved?")
- 9 What was the answer Paul gave? ("Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.")
- 10 Why was the jailer full of joy? (He was saved.)
- 11 Why did Paul insist on a public escort from the prison? (They had been illegally flogged and imprisoned.)
- 12 Where did the missionaries go before leaving the city? (To Lydia's house to say goodbye to the believers there.)

Carry-over activity

Interviews

You may wish to record interviews with Paul, Lydia, the slave girl and the jailer.

With the children work out what questions you should ask. Give these to the “interviewer”.

Ask for volunteers to role play the different characters. Record the interviews and play them back.

Lesson 5

Alone in Athens

Scripture for teachers

Acts 17

Central truth

There is only one God and He is Creator, Ruler and Judge

Application

Unsaved: You should worship, love and obey Him

Memory verse

“God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands” Acts 17:24

Visual aids

- ◆ Flashcards: 5-1, 5-2, 5-3, 5-4, 5-5 and 5-6
- ◆ Map showing places Paul visited on his second missionary journey

Lesson outline

Introduction

“Where are you going on holiday?”

Progression of events

- 1 Paul goes to Athens, after Thessalonica and Berea
- 2 He sees the idols
- 3 He is distressed **CT**
- 4 He spreads the Gospel **CT**
- 5 Paul is invited to speak to the Areopagus

Climax

He speaks to the Areopagus

God is Creator

God is Ruler

God is Judge **CT**

Conclusion

Some mock **CTU**

Some wish to hear more **CTU**

A few believe **CTU**

Lesson

“Where are you going on holiday?” asked Tanya.

“We are going camping. Hope the weather’s good,” replied Jason.

“We’re going to Greece and we’ll visit Athens,” Tanya continued.

“What’s special about Athens?” Jason asked.

“I don’t know, but Dad says it is very, very old ...”

“And boring,” Jason interrupted.

“No,” insisted Tanya, “with my Dad around, old places are never boring.”

Lots of people visit Athens, because it is a beautiful old city. Even in Paul’s days it was old, but the buildings were not ancient ruins. They were magnificent buildings, which were in use.

Flashcard 5-1

As a boy, Paul had heard of Athens. He knew that some of the world’s wisest men lived there. I am sure he was looking forward to visiting the city. He wasn’t going as a tourist. Why, do you think, he was going there? Yes, as a missionary, to tell about Jesus Christ.

As he headed towards Athens, he must have thought about the last places he had visited. After Philippi, there was Thessalonica. It had been difficult there. The Jews had organised a mob. These wild men had shouted, “They are against Caesar, they are saying there is another king, a man called Jesus.” Paul and Silas had had to escape in the night.

Their next stop, Berea, had been different. The people had been so interested. They listened carefully and then looked up the Scriptures to check out if what they heard was true. If you can, it is always good to check things you are taught with the Bible, like the Bereans did.

What would it be like in Athens?

Flashcard 5-2

As he approached, Paul would have seen the huge gold and ivory statue to the Greek god Athena, which stood tall above the city. The city itself was very beautiful with dazzling stone and marble buildings. There were temples and a university. There were shrines, statues and altars to the many Greek gods and goddesses. Each one was a work of art, made out of stone, marble, gold, silver, brass or ivory. Even today some of these can be seen in museums throughout the world. Most visitors to Athens would have exclaimed, “Wow! What a beautiful place!” Paul did not. How do you think Paul felt?

Allow the children to participate.

Indicate on map.

The Bible tells us that he was greatly distressed (Acts 17:16). Seeing such a forest of idols broke Paul's heart. Paul knew that these gods were helpless, lifeless things, yet the people of Athens worshipped them. Paul saw that they even had an altar to "the unknown God" because they thought a god might have been left out, with no shrine or statue, and would be offended. Paul knew that God, the God of the Bible, is the only God and He should be worshipped by everyone. The people of Athens **must** hear about Him.

If Paul were to visit ____ today (*name town or city with which the children are familiar*), I wonder how he would feel. He would not see the same statues, but he would see many idols. An idol is something more important than God. In our shops there are TVs, computers, clothes, toys and many other things, which take God's place in people's lives.

On the streets are crowds of people who do not love or worship God. The things in the shops are far more important to them. What about you? Who or what is most important in your life? Remember, God made you to love and obey Him.

Flashcard 5-3

The people of Athens did not even know about the Lord. The streets and market place were full of people. Nothing pleased them more than standing talking about new ideas and news. They thought of themselves as clever people. They listened to Paul, who had first told the Gospel to the Jews in the synagogue. A group quickly gathered in the street, listening intently to the missionary. They had never heard anything like this before! Paul explained God's message as clearly as he could, trusting God that they would understand. Some were interested; some were offended.

"He seems to be telling us about foreign gods of which we've never heard," some observed.

"Yes, I picked out two - Jesus and resurrection."

"I'd like to hear more," a man may have said.

"Well, I wouldn't. He is just a cock sparrow teacher!" another asserted.

"A babbler, that's all he is!" another announced.

It was hard to be the only Christian there, but Paul didn't give up. He kept on explaining about God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Then, one day he received a surprise invitation to speak to the members of the Areopagus.

Flashcard 5-4

This was a very important council, or committee in Athens. They spoke very politely to Paul.

CT

Use a large piece of card and make a list of the things, which the children say are very important in their lives.

You could word this as, "He's just crazy!"

"Areopagus" is Greek for "hill of Ares".

The Areopagus is a rocky hill northwest of the Acropolis in Athens. It is famous as the meeting place of the city's prime

council (also called the Areopagus).

“You are bringing strange things to our ears, we would like you to explain your teaching.”

The educated Greeks, in their long flowing garments, waited for Paul’s speech.

“Men of Athens,” Paul began, “I see that you are very religious people. As I walked around your city, I saw that you have many gods. I noticed too, that you had one altar ‘to the unknown god’. He is the One I want to tell you about.”

They were really listening now. We will read the rest of Paul’s speech from the Bible. Listen carefully for what Paul told them about God.

Read Acts 17:24-31 from your Bible and then ask the children what Paul told the council about God.

Flashcard 5-5

Paul made it clear that **God is Creator**. He made everything and everyone. All people came from Adam. If God made all people, it makes sense that all people should love Him, obey Him and worship Him.

Paul explained that if God is the Creator, He could not possibly be a statue made by men out of silver or stone! Our memory verse is exactly what Paul said. Let’s repeat it together.

Say the memory verse together.

God is Ruler. He rules over everything. God has planned out where people and families live. He is in charge of all that happens. We depend on Him for every breath we take. What an awesome God!

God is Judge. In a court, a judge decides if a person is guilty or not. Jesus Christ will judge everyone - the people of Athens, you and me. We will have to answer to Him for every thought, word and deed. Is that really true?

CT

“Yes,” said Paul, “God has given proof. He raised His Son from the dead. That is the proof that He will, one day, judge all people who have ever lived.”

God wants you to know these things and to take them seriously. That is what He wanted for the educated people of Athens too. If you want to talk more about trusting Jesus Christ as your Saviour, come and talk with me when club is over. I will be ... *(designate specific place)*.

Flashcard 5-6

Let’s pretend we are sitting with the council members, listening to Paul.

“A dead man alive again! I could never believe that!” someone sneers.

“No educated Greek could believe in resurrection,” another adds.

“Resurrection - ha, ha, ha!”

Would you join the group of mockers? Perhaps you have laughed at Christians. Remember, sneering and mocking do not change the facts: God is Creator, God is Ruler, and God is Judge.

“Silence!” someone may interrupt. “Some of us are interested, we would like to hear more at a later date.”

“Paul must come and address us again. Perhaps we’ll believe, perhaps not.”

Did they? We do not know. No doubt, they talked a lot about the new ideas, but for many that is all they did. Often when people put off trusting the Lord Jesus as Saviour, they never do it. Are you like those people? You like the Bible stories, you like club and church, you like to sing, but God is not first in your life and the Lord Jesus is not your Saviour.

Others, just a few, have a different reaction.

“This is the truth we have listened to! I am finished with worthless idols; I will worship the one true God. My trust is in Jesus Christ, His only Son.”

The Bible gives us the names of those who believed - Dionysius (a man) and Damaris (a woman).

It is only when you trust Jesus Christ as your Saviour that you do not need to be afraid of Him as Judge. He will not then sentence you to punishment for your sin, because as your Saviour He took your punishment. Will you be like the few people of Athens who trusted the Lord Jesus? God “commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). He wants you to turn from all that has taken His place in your life. Trust the Lord Jesus as your Saviour and begin today to love and obey God, the Creator, the Ruler and the Judge.

Review questions

- 1 How did most people in Athens spend their time? (Talking about new ideas and news.)
- 2 Why was Paul very distressed in Athens? (There were so many idols.)
- 3 Where did he first go to tell the Gospel? (To the synagogue.)
- 4 Where did he tell the Gospel after the synagogue? (The streets.)
- 5 What idols do people today have? (TV, computers, clothes, toys - anything that is more important than God in their lives.)
- 6 What was the Areopagus? (Special council or committee in Athens.)

CTU

CTU

CTU

Review game

What happened there?

Write the following places on cards and put them in an envelope:
 Jerusalem; Cyprus;
 Philippi; Thessalonica;
 Athens; Berea; Arabia;
 Tarsus; Antioch;
 Damascus; Caesarea;
 Macedonia.

Divide children into two teams.

The child who answers correctly for his team gets 50 points.

He then chooses a card. If the team can tell one fact about Paul in that place, the score is doubled (100 points).

It is unlikely that the children will be able to supply a fact about all the places - although they have been mentioned in the lessons. This will add to the excitement!

- 7 Why did the Greeks have an altar “to the unknown God”? (They feared they may have forgotten a god and he would be offended if left out.)
- 8 Name three facts Paul told the special council about God. (He is Creator, Ruler and Judge.)
- 9 Which part of his message did some make fun of? (The resurrection.)
- 10 Complete the sentence. “Some mocked, some wanted to hear more and a few ____.” (Believed.)
- 11 If God is the only God how many people should love and obey Him? (All people.)
- 12 If Jesus Christ is your Saviour, why do you not need to be afraid of God as Judge? (Jesus Christ has been punished for your sin already.)

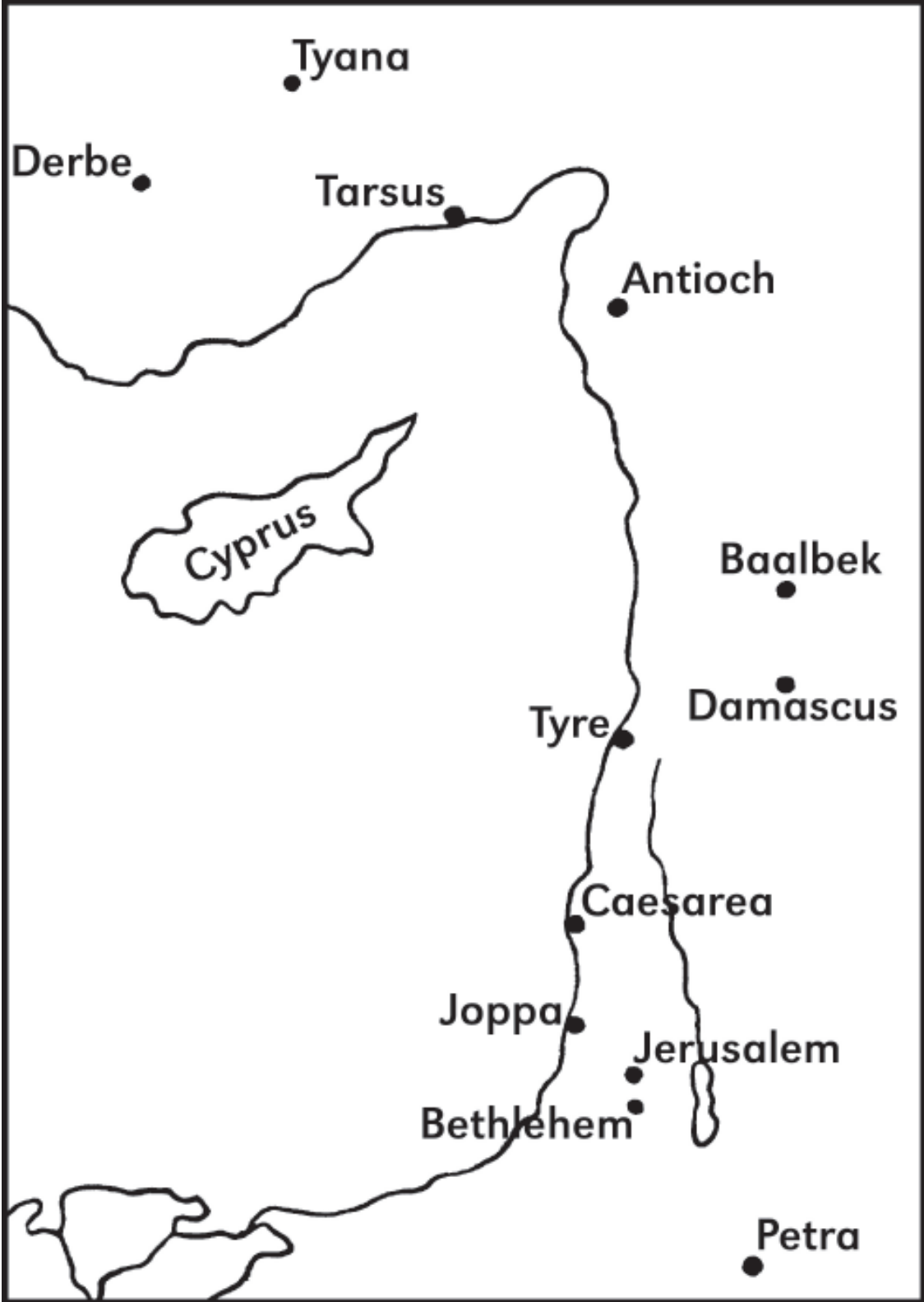
Carry-over activity

Posters

The children could make posters - some depicting “God is Creator”, others, “God is Ruler”, and others “God is Judge”.

Paul's journey

Review game - lesson 2



Is it part of the Gospel?

Review game - lesson 3

Sin displeases God.	Jesus Christ died on the cross.
God must punish all sin.	Everyone needs a friend.
Peace is a great feeling.	Any religion will do.
Jesus Christ is alive for ever.	Turn from sin to the Lord.

Is it part of the Gospel?

Review game - lesson 3

Trust Jesus Christ to save you.	It's important to be happy.
All people are sinners.	Jesus is the only way to God.
Try to be good.	Jesus Christ is God's only Son.
If you go to church you're OK.	Jesus Christ was punished for our sin.

Copy, cut out and keep in your Bible



Summary of steps for counselling the child who wants to come to Christ

Make sure the child understands about

God

Who is God?
God made us. He speaks to us through the Bible.
God is holy and pure. He loves us.

Sin

What is sin?
Sin is disobeying God's commands. It is against God.
Speak about specific sins.
The child is a sinner by nature and act. (We sin because we are sinners.)
Sin deserves punishment.

The Saviour

Who alone can take away your sin?
God the Son died on the cross for sinners.
The Lord Jesus rose again from the dead.
He is Lord of all.

Explain how to be saved

Explain what the Lord wants us to do, and what He will do.
Use a Bible verse (*John 1:12; 3:16; 6:37; Acts 16:31; Romans 6:23 or 10:13*).
What does the Lord want you to do?
What will the Lord do?
Warn about difficulties.
Ask: "Do you want to trust Christ, or would you rather wait?"
Encourage the child to pray audibly (if ready).

Speak about assurance of salvation

Go back to the Bible verse you used.
Speak about a changed life.
Tell him what the person who is truly trusting in Christ can know.

Give (later) some advice about the Christian life

Read and obey your Bible.
Talk to God, our heavenly Father.
Tell others what the Lord has done for you.
Ask God to forgive you when you sin.
Meet with other Christians.
Remember the Lord promises: "*I will never leave you*" (*Heb 13:5*).