

Paul Before Rulers

BIBLE PASSAGE: Acts 24:22-27; 25:1-14; 26:24-32

MAIN POINT: Paul preached about Jesus to rulers.

KEY PASSAGE: Philippians 1:21

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: When should we tell others about Jesus? We should tell about Jesus all the time.

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**TEACH
THE STORY**
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THE STORY**
(10+ MINUTES)
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Leader BIBLE STUDY

Paul was in custody in Caesarea, the capital of the Roman province of Judea. The Jewish leaders had brought serious charges against him, so Paul now stood before Felix, the governor. Felix listened to Paul's defense but delayed a ruling. He met with Paul off and on for two years. When his time as governor ended, Felix left Paul in prison because he did not want to upset the Jews.

Festus succeeded Felix as governor. The Jews presented their accusations against Paul and asked Festus to bring him to Jerusalem. They hoped to ambush Paul as he traveled and kill him. But Festus invited Paul's accusers to make their case in Caesarea. When Festus heard Paul's case, he asked if Paul wanted to be tried in Jerusalem. Paul, knowing his rights as a Roman citizen, appealed to be heard by Caesar.

Several days later, King Agrippa visited Festus and heard about Paul. He asked to listen to Paul's defense himself. Festus wasn't sure how he would justify his sending Paul to Caesar without substantiated charges, and he hoped this hearing would provide stronger evidence against Paul. Agrippa told Paul he was out of his mind, but determined Paul could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.

With these events, Paul was positioned to go to Rome, just as God had said he would. (See Acts 19:21; 23:11.) God had chosen Paul to take the gospel to Gentiles, kings, and the Israelites. (See Acts 9:15-16.) Paul was confident that Jesus has the power to save people from sin, and he was willing to do whatever it took to share the gospel.

As you teach preschoolers, prompt them to consider how Paul might have felt as he spoke before rulers and remained in custody for two years. Lead them to consider how God was at work to keep His promises.



Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit <http://www.ministrygrid.com/web/tb/gospelproject>.

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The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use props:** Gather props to represent each character in the story: a paper chain for Paul, sashes for Felix and Festus, paper crown or scepter for Agrippa, badge for jailer, and so forth. Invite a volunteer to wear the prop as each person is mentioned in the story, or the storyteller can wear props and change as the story progresses.
- **Move around:** Identify four locations within the storytelling area: 1) jail; 2) meeting place with Felix and his wife; 3) meeting place with Festus; 4) meeting place with King Agrippa and queen. Move to each location at the appropriate moment in the Bible story.

Paul Before Rulers

Acts 24:22-27; 25:1-14; 26:24-32

Paul was in prison, but he was safe for now. A group of Jews in Jerusalem had tried to hurt him, and the Roman soldiers took him away to meet with **important leaders**. The leaders **wanted to figure out** what was going on and **why people were upset with Paul**.

First, Paul met with Felix, the governor. Felix already knew what Paul believed, but he agreed to listen to him. Felix told the jail guards to let Paul's friends visit him. Then, a few days later, **Felix asked Paul to come speak to him and his wife. Paul talked about faith in Jesus.** He told them about being right with God and having self-control. Paul said that one day God is going to judge the world.

Felix was afraid of what Paul said. He sent Paul away. For two years, Paul stayed in prison and sometimes met with Felix to talk. But Felix did not let Paul go free.

Then a new governor came, and his name was Festus. Festus met with Paul and Paul said, "I have not done anything wrong. I want to see Caesar!" Caesar was the emperor of Rome. As a Roman citizen, Paul had the right to take his case to him. Festus agreed.

Before Paul went to Rome, Agrippa—king of Judea—and the queen came to visit. Paul told the king about how he became a believer. He told the king that Jesus died to bring salvation to Jews and Gentiles.

"Paul, you are crazy!" the king said.

"No, I am telling you the truth," said Paul. **"I wish you—and everyone who is listening—might believe in Jesus."**

The king and other leaders got up. They **did not think**

Paul had done anything wrong. The king was ready to let Paul go, but Paul had asked to go to Rome, so they had to send him there.

Christ Connection: God chose Paul to tell all kinds of people—even kings!—about Jesus. Even when people were against him, Paul did not stop. He wanted everyone to believe that Jesus is Lord. Paul believed Jesus has the power to save people from sin, and he was willing to do anything to share this good news.

Teach THE STORY

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KEY PASSAGE: Philippians 1:21

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: When should we tell others about Jesus? We should tell about Jesus all the time.

Welcome and worship with song

- “Kingdom Kid” song
- “Don’t Stop” song

Greet preschoolers with a smile. As preschoolers arrive, sing an action song such as “Kingdom Kid” to engage them and help them feel welcomed. Begin worship by leading preschoolers in “Don’t Stop.”

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Bible
- bag
- crown
- chain
- cross
- “Paul Before Rulers” video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

Place a crown, chain, and a cross shape in a bag. Invite three volunteers to pull the items out of the bag.

SAY • Paul taught about Jesus all the time. [*Hold up the cross.*] Even while in prison [*holding up the chain*], Paul told rulers [*holding up the crown*] about how Jesus died to bring salvation to everyone who trusts in Him. Listen to the story from the Bible.

Open your Bible to Acts 24. Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

- Bible
- Key Passage Poster
- Bible marker or ribbon
- “To Live Is Christ” song

Place a Bible marker or ribbon at Philippians 1:21. Invite a few volunteers to come up one at a time and open your Bible to the key passage.

SAY • Though it could be scary to talk to important people

like the king, Paul would not stop preaching about Jesus. Paul knew if he died, he would be with Jesus, and he knew no one is more important than Jesus. Sing the key passage song “To Live Is Christ” together.

Learn the big picture question and answer

SAY • Who remembers our big picture question? *When should we tell others about Jesus?* In our Bible story Paul was in prison teaching about Jesus. Even when people were against him, Paul kept teaching because he was willing to do anything to help people believe Jesus is Lord. *When should we tell others about Jesus? We should tell about Jesus all the time.*

• Big Picture Question Poster

Respond through song and prayer

SAY • God chose Paul to tell all kinds of people—even kings!—about Jesus. Even when people were against him, Paul did not stop. **Paul preached about Jesus to rulers** because he wanted everyone to believe that Jesus is Lord. Paul believed Jesus has the power to save people from sin, and he was willing to do anything to share this good news.

• Main Point Poster
• “Don’t Stop” song
• “You Will Be My Witnesses” song
• “Saved by Grace Through Faith” song
• offering basket

Sing “Don’t Stop” and “You Will Be My Witnesses” as preschoolers move with the music. Prepare for prayer by singing “Saved by Grace Through Faith.” You may also collect an offering.

SAY • Jesus, thank You for helping Paul be brave to share with all kinds of people about You. Thank You for helping us be brave to share with people too so they can be saved from sin. We love You, Jesus. Amen.

• countdown video (optional)

Transition to experience the story

Experience THE STORY

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- red sheet of construction paper
- green sheet of construction paper
- marker
- tape

Play a stop/go game

Write *STOP* and *GO* on red and green sheets of construction paper. Tape the papers back to back. Lead preschoolers to line up side by side facing you. When you hold up *GO*, preschoolers move toward you. When you hold up *STOP*, preschoolers stop in place. Continue until the children reach you, then play again. Consider allowing preschoolers to take turns leading the group.

SAY • Paul never stopped telling people about Jesus even when people were against him. **Paul preached about Jesus to rulers** and all kind of people. He wanted everyone to believe that Jesus is Lord. Paul believed Jesus has the power to save people from sin, and he was willing to do anything to share this good news.

Make a crown

- paper strips
- crayons and markers
- stickers
- adhesive jewels
- stapler or tape

Set out markers, stickers, and adhesive jewels. Give each preschooler a paper strip to decorate like a crown. When finished, wrap each child's crown around her head and staple or tape it to size.

SAY • You all look like very important kings and queens. Not very many countries have kings or queens anymore, but they were in charge in Bible times.

Paul preached about Jesus to rulers, and he preached about Jesus to people like you and me. He wanted everyone to believe that Jesus is Lord.

Invite a pastor to class

Invite a pastor or someone else in your church who is passionate about sharing the gospel to visit your class. Ask the guest to tell stories about sharing the gospel with different people. Allow preschoolers to ask questions.

• guest

SAY • [*Guest's name*] talks to all kinds of people about Jesus, just like Paul did in today's Bible story. **Paul preached about Jesus to rulers.** Like Paul and [*guest's name*], God wants us to tell all kind of people about how Jesus came to rescue people from sin!

Make play dough people

Lead preschoolers to create people from the Bible story out of play dough: kings, rulers, Paul, guards, and so forth. Review the Bible story as preschoolers play.

• play dough
• people-shaped cookie cutters (optional)
• rolling pins (optional)

SAY • **Paul preached about Jesus to rulers** and people like you and me. Paul never stopped telling the good news of Jesus. He wanted everyone to believe that Jesus is Lord.

Play out the Bible story

Provide dress-up items such as crowns, scepters, robes, wands, jewelry, long dresses, and so forth. Invite preschoolers to dress up as kings and rulers.

• royal dress-up clothes

SAY • **Paul preached about Jesus to rulers.** Jesus died on the cross for sin and rose from the dead to defeat death forever. Paul wanted everyone to trust in Jesus!

Transition to review the story

• countdown video (optional)

Review THE STORY

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Review

Point to the giant timeline or big story circle as you review today's Bible story. Ask the following review questions:

1. What kind of people did Paul preach to in our Bible story today? (**Paul preached about Jesus to rulers.**)
2. Who chose Paul to tell all kinds of people about Jesus? (*God*)
3. When people were against Paul, did he stop telling about Jesus? (*no*)
4. Why did Paul keep telling people about Jesus even when they thought he was crazy? (*He wanted them to believe in Jesus too.*)
5. Where did the king send Paul? (*to Rome*)
6. ***When should we tell others about Jesus? We should tell others about Jesus all the time.***

SAY • Paul taught about Jesus all the time, even in jail. Rulers thought he was crazy, but Paul taught the good news of Jesus so they could believe Jesus is Lord and has the power to save them from sin. Sing the unit theme song, "Don't Stop," or key passage song, "To Live is Christ."

- Bible
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle
- Main Point Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Key Passage Poster
- "Don't Stop" song
- "To Live Is Christ" song

Pray

Invite preschoolers to tell you any prayer requests they have.

SAY • Jesus, thank You that we can tell everyone about Your good news. We need Your help to be brave. Thank You for dying on the cross to save us from sin. Help us share this with everyone all the time. Amen.

Missions story

If your preschool ministry is planning a missions activity, discuss the activity, the reasons for it, and your group's progress. If you are not participating in a missions activity, talk about how even when people were against him, Paul did not stop sharing the good news of Jesus. Paul believed Jesus has the power to save people from sin, and he was willing to do anything to share this good news. You may also show the "Casting the Dye Part 2" video.

SAY • The Dye family knew God was sending them to a big city to start a new church. They were leaving their small town they knew to go to a strange, new place. But they chose to obey God even when it was hard and strange. Let's pray for the Dye family as they share the good news with the people of Atlanta.

- "Casting the Dye Part 2"
- "Missions Prayer Cards" printable, 1 per child

Draw whom you can tell

Guide preschoolers to think of someone they can tell about Jesus. Invite them to draw a picture of that person.

SAY • God gave Paul the courage to tell anyone and everyone about the good news of the gospel. Paul even preached to rulers and kings about Jesus' love for them. We can trust God to give us confidence to talk to our friends about Jesus too!

- paper
- crayons or markers