

# 1 The Plan to Stop Paul

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Acts 23

**MAIN POINT:** God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Philippians 1:21

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

**TEACH  
THE STORY**  
(15–20 MINUTES)  
**PAGE 10**



**EXPERIENCE  
THE STORY**  
(25–30 MINUTES)  
**PAGE 12**



**REVIEW  
THE STORY**  
(10+ MINUTES)  
**PAGE 14**



## Leader BIBLE STUDY

As Paul's third missionary journey came to an end, a prophet named Agabus warned him that the Jews would seize him in Jerusalem and hand him over to the Gentiles. (See Acts 21:10-11.)

But Paul did not hesitate. He returned to Jerusalem and was seized by a group of Jews who wanted to kill him because he taught things contrary to their law.

The Roman soldiers nearby saw the commotion and

stepped in, taking Paul into Roman custody. Now Paul was in Gentile hands. Paul remained under Roman protection and was staying in the barracks when the Lord gave him a message: “Have courage! For as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so it is necessary for you to testify in Rome” (Acts 23:11).

What a comforting message for Paul! The sovereign Lord told Paul his future: You’re going to Rome. Paul wasn’t exactly sure how he was going to get to Rome, but he could trust that God was working all things together for that purpose.

The next morning, Paul’s nephew uncovered a plot to kill Paul and reported it to the Roman army commander. The commander arranged for Paul to go to Caesarea, where he would be safe.

In this Bible story, we see God using human means to bring about His end. Even when others threatened his life, Paul trusted that God is faithful. He believed that God, who showed His love for the world by sending Jesus to die on the cross and rise again, would help him through hard times.

We too can risk everything to share the gospel with courage because we know that God loves us and will care for us. God calls us to be obedient and faithful as we take part in His greater plan to show His glory to us and through us for the fame of His name.



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

Check out the video “The Big Story” for a picture of this quarter’s part in God’s big story of redemption.

# The BIBLE STORY

## Bible Storytelling Tips

## The Plan to Stop Paul

*Acts 23*

### • Use story stones:

Gather river rocks. With a permanent marker, draw simple images to represent people and events in the Bible story. (Paul, group of angry Jews, army commander, Jewish leaders, Paul's nephew, soldiers, horse) Place stones in a basket. Show the Paul stone and begin to tell the story, showing stones as you tell it.

### • Make it a

**monologue:** Enlist a leader to dress in Bible times clothing and tell the Bible story as a monologue from the perspective of Paul's nephew.

**Paul was in Jerusalem.** The believers there were happy to see Paul, but some of the Jews were not happy. **One day, when Paul went to the temple, a crowd of Jews** grabbed Paul and dragged him outside. They **wanted to hurt him, but the commander of the Roman army stopped them.**

**The army commander arrested Paul and took him to a group of leaders** whose job was to decide if someone had broken the law and to decide how lawbreakers should be punished.

Paul stood in front of the leaders and said, "Friends, I did what God wants me to do. I did not do anything wrong." **Paul told them he was in jail for teaching that Jesus rose from the dead.** Then the leaders began arguing. Some of them thought Paul was doing the right thing, but some thought he was wrong. **The Roman soldiers took Paul away so he would be safe.**

**The next night, the Lord came to Paul. "Have courage!" said the Lord. "You told people about Me in Jerusalem. You must tell people in Rome too."**

**But the next morning, a group of Jews made another plan to hurt Paul. They told the Jewish leaders about their plan. "Ask the army commander to bring Paul to you," the group said. "Pretend you need to ask him some questions. Then, when he is almost here, we will get him!"**

**Paul's nephew heard the Jews talking about their plan. He hurried to Paul and told him what they said. Paul told him to tell the army commander about the plan.**

**So the army commander told two of his soldiers to**

**get a bunch of soldiers and horses. The soldiers brought a horse for Paul to ride on. That night, the soldiers took Paul to another city to see the Roman governor. God took care of Paul and protected him from the men who wanted to get him.**

*Christ Connection: Even when others wanted to hurt Paul, Paul trusted God. God showed His love for the world by sending Jesus, and Paul believed God would help him through hard times. Like Paul, we can obey God no matter what because we know God loves us and takes care of us.*

# Teach THE STORY

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## 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
- “Animal Images” printable
- “The Plan to Stop Paul” video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

Print and display the “Animal Images.”

**SAY** • God created many animals with the ability to protect themselves. What kind of protection did God give these animals? Are there any other animals that God gave ways to protect themselves? In our Bible story, Paul needed protection, listen to hear how God protected Paul.

Open your Bible to Acts 23. 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** • Our key passage tells us that Paul lived each day to

serve Jesus and tell others about Him. Paul said that if he died for Jesus that would be a reward because he would be with Jesus forever.

Sing the key passage song “To Live Is Christ” together.

## Learn the big picture question and answer

**SAY** • Our big picture question is, *When should we tell others about Jesus? We should tell about Jesus all the time.* Paul worked every day to tell everyone he met about Jesus. God wants all believers to tell people about Jesus, so those people could hear and believe in Jesus too!

• Big Picture Question Poster

## Respond through song and prayer

**SAY** • God showed His love for the world by sending Jesus, and Paul believed God would help him through hard times. Like Paul, we can obey God no matter what because we know God loves us and takes care of us. **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.** We tell others about Jesus so they can believe in Him.

• Main Point Poster  
• “Don’t Stop” song  
• “Take My Life and Let It Be” song  
• “Saved by Grace Through Faith” song  
• offering basket

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

**SAY** • God, thank You for protecting Paul as he told others about Jesus. Thank You for protecting us as we tell others about You too. We love You, Jesus. Amen.

## Transition to experience the story

• countdown video (optional)

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LOW PREP

- heavyweight paper
- markers

## Create a stand-up book

Help preschoolers fold heavyweight paper fan-style into four sections. Show children how the book stands upright. Print the big picture question on the front cover and the answer on an interior page. Provide markers. Encourage preschoolers to draw pictures of friends or family members they can tell about Jesus on the other pages.

**SAY** • You can tell many people about Jesus, just like Paul did. Paul knew that God sent Jesus into the world because He loves people. *When should we tell others about Jesus? We should tell about Jesus all the time.*

LOW PREP

- “Don’t Stop” song (optional)
- “To Live Is Christ” song (optional)

## March like soldiers

Tell preschoolers that you are the army commander and they are the soldiers. Lead preschoolers to march around the room as music plays. Stop the music and call out an exercise for preschoolers to perform such as three jumping jacks, two frog hops, or one push-up.

**SAY** • Soldiers exercise to stay strong. God used the army commander and soldiers in today’s Bible story to protect Paul. **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.** Like Paul, we can obey God no matter what because we know God takes care of us.

## Build a fort

Form teams. Provide blocks and a Paul figure attached to a block for each team. Lead preschoolers to build a fort surrounding Paul. When each team's fort is complete, teams may take turns tossing small balls at the other team's fort to try to knock it down. The team with the strongest fort wins.

**SAY** • Just as we tried to build a fort to protect our Paul, Paul needed protection from people who wanted to hurt him. **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.** Paul trusted God to keep him safe so he could preach the gospel.

- blocks
- "Paul" printable, 1 per team
- small balls

Tip: Warn preschoolers ahead of time that their tower may be knocked down to avoid tears.

## Explore safety items

Fill a bag with protective items. Invite a preschooler to pull out a safety item and try it on. Ask children to brainstorm how each item can keep them safe.

**SAY** • All of these things items offer protection, but God offers us the greatest protection of all. **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.** Like Paul, we can obey God no matter what because we know God loves us and takes care of us.

- bag
- protective items (oven mitt, helmet, swim floaties, goggles, and so forth)
- hand wipes (to sanitize between uses)

## Play out protecting others

Provide dress-up clothes and other toys for preschoolers to play out professions that protect others, such as firefighters, police officers, doctors and nurses, and parents.

**SAY** • Even when others wanted to hurt Paul, Paul trusted God. Paul believed God would help him through hard times. **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.**

- dress-up clothes
- toy doctor's kits (optional)
- firetrucks and police cars (optional)

## Transition to review the story

- countdown video (optional)

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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. Were the people happy or angry to see Paul? (*Some were happy, and some were angry.*)
2. Where did the Lord tell Paul he would also tell people about Him? (*Rome*)
3. Who protected Paul from the men who wanted to hurt him? (*God*)
4. ***When should we tell others about Jesus? We should tell about Jesus all the time.***

**SAY** • Even when others wanted to hurt Paul, Paul trusted God. God showed His love for the world by sending Jesus, and Paul believed God would help him through hard times. **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.** Like Paul, we can obey God no matter what because we know God loves us and takes care of us.

Sing the unit theme song or key passage song.

## Pray

Invite preschoolers to tell you any prayer requests they have.

**SAY** • God, thank You for giving us the Bible so we can read

- 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

about how Paul told others about Jesus even in hard times. Give us courage to obey You and tell others about You even when it is hard. Amen.

## Missions story

If your preschool ministry is planning a missions activity, introduce the activity and share the reasons for it. If you are not participating in a missions activity, talk about how it was not always easy for Paul to obey God's command to tell others about Jesus, and it is not always easy for us to obey either. Sometimes being a missionary is hard! You may also show the "Casting the Dye Part 1" video.

**SAY** • The Dye family prayed that God would send them to a place to serve Him where people needed a church. They were surprised where God was going to send them. Let's pray for the Dye family as they live in a new area and work to tell others the good news about Jesus.

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

## Sing "My God Is So Big"

Sing the song "My God Is So Big." If you are unfamiliar with the tune, lyrics, or motions look them up online before the session.

**SAY** • Our God is so big, strong, and mighty. He is able to use people to do His plan. God planned to protect Paul so he could go to Rome to tell others about Jesus. God used the army commander, the soldiers, and Paul's nephew to keep him safe. **God protected Paul so he could preach about Jesus.** Like Paul, we can obey God no matter what because we know God loves us and takes care of us.