

New Testament Stories

Week 1 Being a follower

Point to emphasize: We can learn from following good leaders.

References: Matt. 10:1-4

Memory verse: Matthew 10:24

A disciple is not above the teacher; nor a slave above his master.

Visuals:

1. Children's Dictionary (optional)

Songs:

1. Part company
2. A friend loveth at all times

Story sample:

When Jesus was living on this earth there were many people who followed Him. He attracted crowds of people and many followed Him because they were amazed at all the things He did. But there were only 12 that Jesus called to follow Him, to be taught by Him. They formed a group called the disciples. In the dictionary it says that a disciple is "someone who follows the teaching of a leader; a pupil." So the most important word here is **FOLLOWS**. The disciples were those who followed Jesus to learn from Him. He was the best leader to follow.

One time growing up I had a good coach. She would teach us all we needed to play the game well but she also was a leader in other ways. She was always polite - using the words "please" and "thank you" with us. She wouldn't just bark out instructions as we played. She would shout out, "Hey (name). please remember to pass the ball." So, after a while I realized that I also was saying "please" and "thank you" more often. The other thing about her was that she would correct you if certain words came out of your mouth. She had rules of conduct and you had to follow them. No ugly or angry words were to come out of your mouth when you played. We all followed her lead.

It was kind of like that with the disciples. They followed Jesus all the time. And all the time they were learning from Him. They saw Him care for the youngest ones. They saw Him take care of all different ones and saw how He met every man's need. They saw how he cared for poor ones, educated ones, sick ones etc. And through this they learned. They also saw Jesus feeding so many people in an orderly way. From this they learned how they should be neat and orderly, too. By following Him they learned many things.

******Story teller: end with an example of following a good leader. See if any of the kids have followed such a good leader, too.*

New Testament Stories

Week 2 Different functions

Point to emphasize: Women have a special way to take care of others.

References: Luke 8:1-2a

Memory verse: Psalm 68:11b

. . .The women who bear the glad tidings are a great host.

Songs:

1. I love my mom and dad
2. Children, obey your parents

Story sample:

In addition to the twelve disciples who followed Jesus, there was another group of women who also followed Jesus. These two groups often traveled as they followed Jesus. And what each group did was so important yet also quite different. All the young men in this group had left their families and jobs to follow Jesus. In the other group there were some young women but there were also some moms and wives. Some of these women were wealthy. Let me write some of their names - Mary, Mary, Joanna & Salome. Traveling would have been tough without the women.

Women are very good at taking care of people in so many ways. One time I knew a family whose mom had to be gone for a month to take care of her elderly parents. That family had to do everything without mom. Were the children neat and tidy when they got dropped off at school? No, the girl's hair was often un-brushed. Their shirts were pretty full of wrinkles. Socks often did not match. And what about breakfast, lunch and dinner? Well, they did eat, but it was the same thing every day – cereal for breakfast, peanut butter and jelly sandwich for lunch, and most dinners were things like hot dogs and fried egg sandwiches. And the house, do you think it got cleaned well? No - with three kids and a dog, that dad was busy just trying to make it through the day. That dad was not able to do all the things his wife did. That family made it through the month, BUT it was nicer, smoother, gentler, and easier when mom returned.

Of course, the young men who followed Jesus were very important. But they were not able to do some things in the same way as the women. I am pretty sure that the young men all appreciated the care the group of women could give them as they traveled.

****story teller- tell your own story to show what a girl or women does is so important.*

New Testament Stories

Week 3 Giving

Point to emphasize: Helping others with what we have.

References: Luke 8:3b

Memory verse: Proverbs 21:26b

. . .But the righteous man gives and does not hold back.

Visuals:

Bag of fruit

Songs:

1. Blessed to give
2. The Bible is the word of God

Story sample:

So the Lord Jesus walked from town to town and these two groups followed.

Today traveling from place to place is pretty easy. You can travel by plane, train, car or bus. You can find hotels and motels in every place. And eating while traveling is easy since there are plenty of restaurants and grocery stores. You can plan ahead and make reservations in each city where you want to go. BUT for the Lord Jesus and His disciples traveling from city to city and village to village was not as easy. They often walked on dirt roads. There was no guarantee that they would find a room to stay in at night or that someone would offer to have them eat in their house in the next place. You might not have many comforts traveling around like this. BUT the group of women traveling with Jesus and His disciples ministered to them out of their possessions.

What might that mean – “ministered to them out of their possessions”? Well, if I have a sack full of bananas, mangos, grapes, oranges and pears (*have a bag filled with fruit*) as my possession, then what do you get if I minister to you out of my possessions? That’s it! You get what I have. These women had some possessions and they used these to meet the daily needs of Jesus and His disciples. Using their possessions these women did many things and bought many things to take care of Jesus and His disciples as they traveled. These women were willing to help others with the things they had. This also included having money available to pay for things as were needed.

One time I lived where it was COLD in the winter. Oh, the wind seemed to blow right through you and it was so cold! Two college students came to stay there during one winter. They had never lived where it was cold so they did not have warm coats with them. Right away, I went into my closet and pulled out two coats that I had. Each picked out one. I was so happy to help them out. I liked my coats but I could not wear them all at the same time! I decided it was better to have the coats get used every day than just hang in my closet.

*****story teller-tell how you gave or shared something you had with someone else.
Lead the kids to discuss their own sharing.*

New Testament Stories

Week 4 REVIEW

As much as possible, try to include the children in preparing for and presenting the review. The following are the most important points of each week to emphasize with the children, and a few activity ideas:

Week 1:

Jesus is the best one to follow.
We can learn from following good leaders.

Activities: Have the children play "Follow the Leader" or "Simon Says" (try using "please" and "thank you" in the game). Or, have them divide up into groups and make a list of what makes a good leader. Then have the groups come back together and compare their lists.

Week 2:

The people that followed Jesus were in two groups – men and women.
The women ministered to Jesus and the disciples. Women have a special way to care for others.

Activity: They could make a card for their mom, thanking her for something special that she does that no one else in the family can do for them.

Week 3:

The women gave what they had to take care of Jesus and the others.
We can help others with what we have.

Activity: During snack time, have the children gather everything they need for snack and distribute it, working as a group together.

New Testament Stories

Week 5 They Shared What They Had

Point to emphasize: It is so normal to share what we have – Bible stories, songs, and children's meeting with others

Reference: Acts 3:1-12, 16

Memory verse: Deuteronomy 16:17

Each man shall give as he is able to give, according to the blessing of Jehovah your God, which He has given you.

Story sample:

NOTE TO STORYTELLERS: do not make the miraculous healing of the lame man the central point of the story.

Jesus traveled from city to city and from village to village for three and a half years to bring God's Word to people. Soon people everywhere could recognize Him. People also began to recognize His disciples.

One time Peter and John were together going up into the temple at the time of prayer. At the door of the temple was a beggar who could not walk. Every day someone had to carry him to the door of the temple where he would ask for money or donations.

When this man saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began to ask for some money. Instead of ignoring him Peter looked at him and said, "Look at us". Of course this beggar right away thought that these two were going to give him some money. He was probably a little excited. But Peter and John did not have any money to give him. Instead they gave him what he really needed. They healed the man so that he could walk.

I know a girl about 9 years old who shares what she has in a similar way. She has something quite special to share with her friends. Every week there is a time for children to sing and hear Bible stories together in her home. Instead of keeping this time all to herself, this girl shares it with some of her friends at school. Now a number of her friends really are glad to come every week. They are very glad she shares this with them.

*****Storyteller – start a discussion with the children about the things they have which could be given to or done for others*

New Testament Stories

Week 6 Not Taking the Credit

Point to emphasize: Do not soak up or bask in the admiration of others

Reference: Acts 3:1-12, 16

Memory verse: I Peter 5:5b

. . . and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Story sample:

Last week we talked about a lame man. Peter and John gave him something better than money. He could walk! All the people who had seen him begging now saw him walking and praising God. They were astonished. What had happened to him? They were amazed to see him walking. They wanted to know WHAT had caused the lame man to walk. All their attention was turned to Peter and John and the man who once had been lame.

This surely would have been an easy time for Peter and John to become "famous". The whole crowd of people centered their attention on them. I have seen this many times. Someone has done something that everyone thinks is pretty great. Your response is, "Wow, did you see what that person just did? Isn't that fantastic!" The crowd swarmed to see and hear what this person would say. The crowd was spellbound, held in awe of the person's assumed greatness.

So what do you think happened in this case? Did Peter or John say something to the crowd that made them appear great? Did they soak up the crowd's awe and consider they were now heroes? No, not at all. Peter pointed out that it was God who had made the man well, not them.

One year my daughter was in a science fair. She did a presentation on a new treatment that was being used on diabetics. Her grandma was diabetic and had to have a toe removed because of the diabetes and they used this treatment on her. Her teacher was very impressed with her project and gave her credit for doing an excellent job. But rather than take all the credit, she gave credit to the grandma, who explained the treatment to her, to the doctor's office, who gave her many brochures about it, and to her parents, who helped her to gather all the supplies she needed.

*****Storyteller – use a personal example to underline this. Either a time when you got credit and it should have gone to someone else, or someone else was lifted up and did not give credit to the right person.*

New Testament Stories

Week 7 Speaking the Truth

Point to emphasize: We can speak the truth.

Reference: Acts 4:1-22

Memory verse: 2 Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, an unashamed workman, cutting straight the word of the truth.

Story sample:

Peter and John had been speaking to the people about Jesus, and had healed a lame man. When the priests, Sadducees and the captain of the temple heard what Peter and John were doing, they were angry! Peter and John were actually arrested for their speaking. Not only so, many believed their word.

On the next day the rulers, elders, and scribes, along with the high priest gathered and questioned Peter and John. Peter and John were fishermen. But they were now standing in front of these important and powerful rulers, the elders, the scribes and the high priest. All these men were well educated and had esteemed positions among the people. *(write on the board; VERY WELL EDUCATED-TOP POSITIONS. Under it list rulers, elders, scribes, high priest. Then write 2 poor fishermen)* It was like these two fishermen were being examined by a court of law. They asked the disciples, "By what power or in what name did you heal that lame man?" To be in this situation might have made some feel weak.

One time I was walking home from school. At a certain point a police car pulled over and a policeman got out of the car, stopped me and asked me a question. Now, I had not done anything wrong. I had not even seen anything around me that was wrong. But when that policeman questioned me I felt a little weak. He had so much authority and I was just a child, so being questioned like that affected me. I could not answer his question so he got back into the car and drove away. Oh, was I relieved. I could breathe again as the police car left.

But here is a serious situation. Peter and John were arrested and now they stood before this "court" that demanded to know by what power or by what name they healed the lame man. Peter and John were bold. They did not back down. They spoke the truth boldly. They said it was in the name of Jesus that the man had been healed.

(Storyteller: Encourage the children to talk about times they told the truth, even when they were afraid or felt weak.) I hope this week we would speak the truth and next week we can come back with some good examples to talk about.

New Testament Stories

Week 8 Not Admitting they were Wrong

Point to emphasize: We can admit when we are wrong.

Reference: Acts 4:1-22

Memory verse: 1 John 3:18

Little children, let us not love in word nor in tongue but in deed and truthfulness.

Story sample:

Last week we heard how Peter and John had told the truth. The lame man stood before them because of what God had done. Suddenly the rulers, elders, scribes and high priest recognized that these two fishermen had been with Jesus. They were amazed at how these fishermen spoke and how they were not afraid of being questioned. Seeing that the man who had been healed was standing right there with them, these important people had nothing to say against it.

But they could not just let Peter and John go; that would make them look foolish and powerless. They had arrested the disciples, so they had to take some action. What could these rulers do since the lame man was healed and 5,000 people had been there and believed? They could not lock the disciples up for any crime and yet they had arrested them. These rulers should have apologized for wrongly arresting them and let the disciples go.

Sometimes it's hard to admit we are wrong. Once, when I was in school, one time I accused another student of stealing my pencil (my special mechanical pencil that I loved so much!) I even told the teacher that she had taken it. Later on I found it at the bottom of my schoolbox. I was so embarrassed. I didn't want to tell everyone I had been wrong to accuse the girl. I wanted to pretend it had never happened! But it bothered me so much, I finally had to admit to the whole class what had happened.

The accusers of Peter and John didn't want to admit they were wrong. If they did that they would have looked so silly. It would appear that the rulers also believed in Jesus. Sadly, the rulers made threats against Peter and John and told them never to teach based upon the name of Jesus to anyone. They charged them not ever to utter this name at all. But Peter and John answered and said to them, "we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (*Everyone repeat this with me three times*) Then they were forced to release them since the people were all glorifying God for what had happened.

Have any of you ever had to admit you were wrong? Did you say you were sorry?

New Testament Stories

Week 9 They Took Care of One Another

Point to emphasize: Caring for each other causes a pleasant situation

Reference: Acts 4: 32-5:11

Memory verse: Hebrew 13:16

But do not forget doing good and sharing with others, for with such sacrifices
God is well pleased.

Story Sample:

After Peter and John were released by the rulers they went to be with the other Christians. Everyone was so joyful - thanking and praising the Lord. It was such a pleasant situation. Many times when the people who love God get together you can hear the same kind of thanking and praising. Amazing! People 2,000 years ago were doing just what your folks do today.

This pleasant situation continued among all the Christians in that city. They got together and were in each others' homes throughout the week. By doing this they got to know each other and cared for each other. Some had extra lands or houses and decided to sell them to help take care of those who had nothing. It was very pleasant among them.

I had two very good friends. And the three of us would rarely get angry with each other. HOW is that possible? We liked being together and having a good time with each other more than getting our own way. When we were together and one suggested something, we usually went along with it. It gets unpleasant when one always has to have their own way. (insert your own experience)

****wrap up the time talking with the children about how to keep the situation pleasant.*

New Testament Stories

Week 10 Giving from the Heart

Point to emphasize: Don't deceive, rather give from the heart.

Reference: Acts 4:32—5:11

Memory verse: 2 Corinthians 9:7

Each one as he has purposed in his heart, not out of sorrow or out of necessity,
for God loves a cheerful giver.

Songs:

Story sample:

The situation was so pleasant among the Christians; but one day something very **UNPLEASANT** happened. A certain man and his wife did something very serious. They saw that so many were selling their extra land and giving the proceeds to help others. This couple did not sell their land because they cared for the others. They sold it so that others would appreciate them. They sold it for the wrong reasons! And not only that, when they sold it they kept part of the money for themselves. That was ok, you know. It was their land. No one asked or expected them to sell it. No one told them to give all the proceeds. But they sold their land and gave some of the money from it to get some kind of recognition. They decided to deceive the others. To deceive is to lead someone to believe something that is not true. They would not tell the truth that they sold the land for more and kept some for themselves. They wanted to look good in the eyes of others.

The Bible says we should give out of a happy heart and in secret. Our giving should not be to impress others. It is a matter from our heart. It makes our heart happy to give to others. And that is how it was with most who sold their land to take care of others. They gave from their heart and it made them happy.

NOTE TO STORYTELLERS: do not mention the ending of Ananias and Sapphira because it is not the central point of the story.

One time a 3rd grade girl had some very special homemade candy. She only had a small amount but she really wanted to enjoy it with her best friends. So she cut the piece of candy into 4 equal parts and gave a share to her three friends. She was so happy to share her special homemade candy!

Did any of us have a happy heart this week because we gave something to someone else?

New Testament Stories

Week 11 REVIEW

As much as possible, try to include the children in preparing for and presenting the review. The following are the most important point of each week to emphasize with the children.

Week 5 – They shared what they had

Point to emphasize: It is so normal to share what we have – Bible stories, songs, and children's meeting with others

Week 6 – Not taking the credit

Point to emphasize: Do not soak up or bask in the admiration of others

Week 7 – Speaking the truth

Point to emphasize: We can speak the truth.

Week 8 – Not admitting they were wrong

Point to emphasize: We can admit when we are wrong.

Week 9 – They took care of one another

Point to emphasize: Caring for each other causes a pleasant situation

Week 10 – Giving from the heart

Point to emphasize: Don't deceive, rather give from the heart.

New Testament Stories

Week 12 Being Jealous

Point to emphasize: We accept others without being jealous

Reference: Acts 5:12-42

Memory verse: Romans 13:13

Let us walk becomingly . . . not in strife and jealousy.

Story sample:

As Peter and other Christians in Jerusalem continued sharing concerning their wonderful Lord Jesus many, many more people in that city believed in the Lord. People who lived in nearby cities also heard of the things happening and came to see the disciples (followers) of the Lord. So there were lots of people, crowds of people gathering around the disciples. All of these people were happy to be together.

But when the religious Jews saw this happening they were filled with jealousy! Those jealous Jews could not just stand by and see all the crowds follow Peter and the others. NO!! They had to stop this. They were so full of jealousy that they had to do something against the disciples. So they grabbed them and put them into prison. They were behind locked doors with guards standing at the doors.

Well, this is getting worse. To be jealous is bad! But to act in jealousy against others is terrible! None of us should do something to others in jealousy. Peter and the others had not broken any laws. No one had the right to put them into prison.

By this story can see that people can do bad things when they are jealous. We all can do bad things if we are so jealous. So remember, don't do anything when you are jealous.

When I was young, I used to be jealous of my sisters because everyone seemed to like them more than they liked me. Sometimes I would even want to talk bad about them or make fun of them so that I could feel like I was better than them. But if I thought about it first, I would realize that I was jealous and there was no reason to do that. It only brought me down, not them. And, besides that, they were very nice and I liked them too! *(use your own personal example)*

Now, don't worry about what happened to Peter and the others who were thrown into prison. God did something wonderful and they were released from that prison.

*****Serving ones and children should have some testimonies of their hearts and feelings towards others. "How would you feel if someone won the prize but you really had tried hard to win too."*

New Testament Stories

Week 13 How Do We Group Ourselves?

Point to emphasize: We can enjoy being with everyone,
even those who are different than us

Reference: Acts 6: 1-7

Memory verse: 1 John 4:7a

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God, . . .

Story sample:

Now the disciples in Jerusalem were multiplying in number. Some of the Jews who believed in Jesus had been living in other countries but they returned to Jerusalem. While living in other countries they had learned another language. They were now Greek-speaking. The Jews who grew up in Jerusalem spoke Hebrew. Being from different places can cause misunderstandings.

One time I was with a group of people at a dinner. As we sat to eat I noticed that mostly the Chinese people sat together in one place, the Hispanic people sat together in another place, and the English speakers sat together in a third place. No one told the people at this dinner to do this. But they grouped themselves this way.

This is what the Greek speakers and Hebrew speakers did. They grouped together by their language and where they came from. Grouping together in this way caused some misunderstandings between the groups.

How do you group yourself on the play ground at school? (*have a discussion based on how the children respond*) It seems that once we have groups that always stay together, others feel unwanted or left out. Grouping like this can cause an unfriendly rivalry. Wouldn't it be better to play with some on one day and then play with others on another? This way we get to know more friends. We find out that we really are a lot alike even though our skin color, hair color or home language is different.

For myself, I know in the future, when I go to a dinner like that again, I will be sure to sit with others, so that I can get to know *everyone*, not just those who speak English or have the same color of skin.

New Testament Stories

Week 14

How Do We Solve Problems When We Have Them?

Point to emphasize: We can learn to be problem solvers

Reference: Acts 6: 1-7

Memory verse: Philippians 2:14

Do all things without murmurings and reasonings

Story sample:

There was a problem that needed to be solved. You see, these believers had a practice of setting up tables of food so that the ones among them who needed extra food could have what they need. But it was not working out as it should. So, there was a problem.

How did they solve it? They went to the 12 apostles and told them. Those 12 men had a lot of experience and were wise. *(put heading on the board: How to solve a problem. Under this write #1-go to the more experienced or older ones)*

Sometimes when we have a problem, instead of going to our mom or dad or teacher to work out the solution, we try to solve the problem by ourselves. I knew a little girl who spilled her vegetable soup all over the floor. To solve her problem, she took her mom's vacuum and tried to clean up the mess. As she did it the broth sprayed all over. When her mom got home, she had to clean up the mess her daughter had made. Someone older and wiser would have known that you must have the correct kind of vacuum!

The solution the apostles gave to the problem was to appoint seven men to set up the food distribution tables. They did not try to do everything all by themselves. *(put up on the board: #2 they did not do everything by themselves)* The apostles were looking for some to be at the tables to distribute food. *(put up on board: #3 choose others to be responsible)* To solve the problem the twelve apostles chose seven who would be responsible for the distribution of food.

This reminds me of my mom. In my house my mom was the best dishwasher, bed-maker and cleaner there was. If you really wanted the house spic and span, then you just let my mom do it. It would have been easy for my mom to do all the chores in our house. But she was wise not to do it all herself. It was the family's house and we all should have been involved in keeping it clean and nice. So, all of us, children and my dad, had our daily chores.

Finally, the seven men were glad to serve the new believers in this way. Not one of them thought it was a lowly task that someone else should do. So maybe the last thing on the board in "How to solve a problem" is: *(Put on the board: #4 do your part with a happy heart. Be willing to take care of others).*

And of course this solved the problem. Everyone was pleased with how the daily distribution of food now met all the early believers' needs. *(Talk with the children about how they have solved problems in the past)*

New Testament Stories

Week 15 Well-attested

Point to emphasize: We can do things responsibly to be respected by others

Reference: Acts 6: 1-7

Memory verse: Titus 3:14a

And let those also who are ours learn to maintain respectable works for their necessary needs . . .

Story sample:

Last week we talked about how the apostles were going to choose seven well-attested men. Well-attested...that is an unusual word. It has the meaning "to be approved". There was once a high school boy I knew who was well-attested at school. He was a top student - the best in his class. When he graduated he gave the senior speech. But he wasn't just smart, he was well-attested. In many situations in school he had proved himself to be honest, true, helpful, dependable, caring about others, and a leader among the students. The teachers and students alike respected him for what he was.

*(***storyteller: please insert your own story about a child who was well-attested. It could be the story of a boy who took out the trashcan for an elderly neighbor who could not manage so well. Then you can ask one child if they have ever done something like that. Are they well-attested?)*

So that is the kind of ones the apostles were looking for to be at the tables to distribute food. To solve the problem the twelve apostles chose seven who would be responsible for the distribution of food.

One of my chores when I was growing up was to dry the dishes. My sister was given the better chore of washing the dishes. I was given the lower chore of drying them. Oh, how I used to get upset! Why did my sister always get to wash and I always had to dry? For some reason, to me, washing was much better than drying. So, of course, I should get to do the best chore and my sister should do the lower chore. How does that sound to you? *(Very selfish and very proud)* I thought I was better, so I should get the best. I thought my older sister was less than me so she should get the lesser chore. Sounds ugly, doesn't it?

These seven well-attested men who were so capable, so highly respected, were going to be waiting on tables. They were somewhat like the waiters and waitresses in a restaurant. One of these seven, Stephen, was a very good teacher of God's Word. Surely, the best "chore" for him would have been daily teaching of God's Word. But Stephen did not mind his job. Since he and the six others had been chosen to serve the tables, they were glad to do it.

New Testament Stories

Week 16 REVIEW

As much as possible, try to include the children in preparing for and presenting the review. The following are the most important points of each week to emphasize with the children.

Week 12 - Being Jealous

Point to emphasize: We accept others without being jealous

Week 13 - How Do We Group Ourselves?

Point to emphasize: We can enjoy being with everyone, even those who are different than us

Week 14 - How Do We Solve Problems When We Have Them?

Point to emphasize: We can learn to be problem solvers

Week 15 - Well-attested

Point to emphasize: We can do things responsibly to be respected by others

Suggested activity:

Have the children make a chart that they can decorate and take home:

This week:	How I did (<i>or didn't do</i>) this:
Instead of being jealous, I admired a friend's work.	
I did something with someone I have never played with before.	
I solved a problem!	
I did something to show myself responsible and respectable	

New Testament Stories

Week 17 How do we react to things?

Point to emphasize: Our reaction does not need to be in anger.

Reference: Acts 6: 8-15; 7:1-60

Memory verse: Colossians 3: 8

But now, you also, put away all these things: wrath, anger, malice, blasphemy, foul abusive language out of your mouth.

Story sample:

Stephen was one of the well attested men chosen by the apostles. Not only did he serve the tables to take care of the daily needs of the saints, he also went to the synagogues in Jerusalem, where many Jews came together to seek the knowledge of God by studying the Holy Scriptures. Stephen entered into discussions with the Jews concerning God's Word. Many times these ones disagreed with what Stephen taught. No matter how they argued with him, Stephen always seemed to win the discussion because Stephen knew God's heart and God's Word. These Jews became very upset with Stephen. Oh, they were very angry at him. Much of their anger was due to the fact that Stephen exposed them and told them that they were evil like their fathers who persecuted the prophets of God. Stephen also told them that they broke the commandments in the Bible and did not keep God's law.

Why were they getting angry with Stephen since he was right? (It meant that they were wrong)

I admit that I often have become angry when someone wins the discussion and proves that I am wrong. Even it seems that to get angry is our first reaction.

Once I planned to go to the park with my friends. I was sure we were to meet at 11:00. But when I got there no one was there. When Helen showed up at 11:30, I was very angry with her. She replied, "No, we were supposed to meet at 11:30." I began to argue with her, that I was right and she was wrong. Then our other friend, Anne, came up and said, "No, Helen is right. It was 11:30." I had to apologize to Helen for being incorrect about the time and also for becoming so angry with her.

We are often wrong. We really should not expect to always be right yet be quick to consider that we may be the one at fault. We really should not get angry in these situations but learn to "put away" our anger. What is a better reaction? What does it mean to put away? (Admit that the other person is right)

****depending on the age of your children, you can have a discussion about finding other ways to express what you feel (besides anger) or with older children you can lead them to see how easy it is for us to be angry over such small matters and how sad that is.*

New Testament Stories

Week 18 Influenced by Others

Point to emphasize: Don't be swayed by others.

Reference: Acts 6: 8-15; 7:1-60

Memory verse: Ephesians 4:26

Be angry, yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your indignation,

Story sample:

The story about Stephen would have a happy ending if the Jews had been willing to admit that he was correct. But they didn't. Instead they acted in their anger. To be angry is not a sin, but when you become angry there is the possibility of committing sin. We should not continue in our anger but should relinquish (let it go) it before the sun sets.

These ones that were against Stephen stirred people up by telling serious lies about him. They told others that Stephen spoke against God and against Moses. They urged them to take action against Stephen. Stephen had to be stopped!

So a crowd got worked up. They became disorderly and lawless. Often people in crowds lose their normal reasoning and do things as a crowd that they would never do by themselves. Now, you may think "Oh, I would never go along with a crowd if I did not think what they were doing was right." But it is easy to do something in a crowd that you would never do on your own.

When I was in the third grade we had a young substitute teacher one day. One of the children in class told us that we should do some things to give her a bad time. It was supposed to be all in fun, of course. So, when she called role children would answer for other children so that she would think Peter was David. Nearly everyone in the class went along with it. No one answered to his or her real name. We all answered to someone else's name. Then when she went to write on the board, one of the students started to make an animal noise. Others followed. When she turned around to scold someone she used the wrong name and all the children would laugh. When she sat down at her desk kids started tapping feet, snapping fingers, etc. She really could not see who was doing what and because we all answered to the wrong names she could not scold the right child by their real name. Not one of us would have dared do these things to an adult by ourselves. Somehow it was easy to be so mean and disorderly and even to persecute this substitute teacher because we were in a crowd. You are no better than I. So be careful what you do when you are in a crowd. It may be something you are so ashamed of and very sorry about later. Sometimes a crowd of people can become angry, or violent, or difficult to control. This is a shameful thing and can lead us into much trouble.

****Storyteller: please insert your own story on the showing the positive side. Do you know of a case of someone who did not go along with the crowd but rather walked*

New Testament Stories

away from the disorderly things that were happening? Then ask anyone who has done something like this positive example to raise their hand and share it.

So you see, you can do things with only a few children that you would not do by yourself. We all are responsible for what we do. Even if your brother, sister or friend is doing it does not mean you should do it. At times like that it is best to think, "How would I behave if my mom or dad were here?" This will keep us from being swayed by others to do things we should not do.

New Testament Stories

Week 19 One Who Loved God and His Word

Point to emphasize: What kind of a person are you?

Reference: Acts 6: 8-15; 7:1-60

Memory verse: Luke 11:28b

...Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it.

Story sample:

Stephen was considered someone who was well attested. This means that he was someone who others thought highly of because of his reputation. Stephen was seen by others as someone who would do the right thing at the right time by making proper choices. Because of this he was chosen to help the disciples when they had a certain need. This new need was to help serve the tables. This may not seem that important but it is interesting that doing a lowly job can be a test whether you can be trusted to be responsible for more important things. If we cannot be well attested in the simple and lowly things how can we expect more important assignments be given to us?

As we get back to the story about Stephen, it gets worse. The crowd grabs him carries him off. Many come forward and tell all kinds of lies about him. And yet Stephen stood there before them all so calmly. Remember how he was called "well attested"? This is how Stephen was behaving now. He was not yelling back at them or fighting back at them. He was standing there calmly. Everyone else was full of hate and anger but Stephen was calm and pure. Being well attested also means knowing how to behave and conduct oneself in every situation. This is Stephen's testimony and it is wonderful.

When asked to speak about the lies they made against him, he gave a remarkable account from God's Word. His speaking showed that he loved God and His Word. It also showed that he cared for all the ones speaking lies about him.

One time a girl came up to me and said, "I don't like you!" Then she said some terrible things about me. Right away, I wanted to say, "Well, I don't like you, either!" (*Ask the children what should you have said that might have cared for her even if she didn't care for you*)

It is so easy to react like that. But look at Stephen. Even with all the awful things being said about him, his speaking showed he was really well attested.

New Testament Stories

Week 20 Not being treated well

Point to emphasize: We can learn how to handle being persecuted or bullied

Reference: Acts 8:1b, 3

Memory verse: Matthew 5:44b

...Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you,

Story sample:

There now was a lot of trouble for the believers in Jerusalem. They began to be under a lot of persecution. To persecute someone is to treat someone cruelly or unfairly because of their beliefs. To be treated cruelly or to be bullied by someone is hard. But sometimes a situation that is hard or difficult can turn out rather good.

When I was growing up, I had a neighbor named Steve, and he was a real bully. He used to treat me so bad! He was always picking on me and making fun of me because my parents had taught me I shouldn't fight with others. So he would call me "Goodie goodie!" and "Sissy" - all kinds of names to try to start a fight. Oh, I just hated it when I saw Steve coming at school, because I knew he would start picking on me. And I was always afraid that the other kids at school would start picking on me too, because for some reason he had all the other kids at school convinced that he was cool. One day at recess, we were all playing kickball, and he started in on me, fighting over the game. He started to push me, calling me the usual names. I wouldn't fight back though because I knew I shouldn't, even though I was afraid that everyone else would start calling me the same names. And they did! They jumped right in and went along with Steve. But I still wouldn't fight, even though I felt terrible. But you know what? The noon duty supervisor saw the whole thing and she came and broke it up. Steve was sent to the office and all the other kids had to apologize to me. They really felt bad about what they had done. And from that day on, none of them ever called me names again, even Steve! So a bad thing to me ended up being a good thing. *(storyteller: use a similar example of your own)*

It is always a hard time when others gang up on you and don't treat you well. We need to let our parents know, that is for sure! But what other things can we do in cases like this? *(lead the children to discuss different ways to handle this)*

It would have been so easy for these Christians in Jerusalem to fight back. When the Jews started persecuting them they could have formed a "Gang" and fought back. But they didn't. They had other ways to handle the situation.

New Testament Stories

Week 21 REVIEW

As much as possible, try to include the children in preparing for and presenting the review. The following are the most important point of each week to emphasize with the children.

Week 17 – How do we react to things?

Point to emphasize: Our reaction does not need to be in anger.

Week 18 – Influenced by Others

Point to emphasize: Don't be swayed by others.

Week 19 – One who Loved God and His Word

Point to emphasize: What kind of a person are you?

Week 20 – Not being treated well

Point to emphasize: We can learn how to handle being persecuted or bullied

Possibly you could come up with a Bible verse review with the verses from this group of stories.

New Testament Stories

Week 22 Sharing the Good News

Point to emphasize: We can easily share our children's meetings with others.

Reference: Acts 8: 4-5

Memory verse: Psalm 72:17a

His name will be forever; As long as the sun endures, His name will spread;

Story sample:

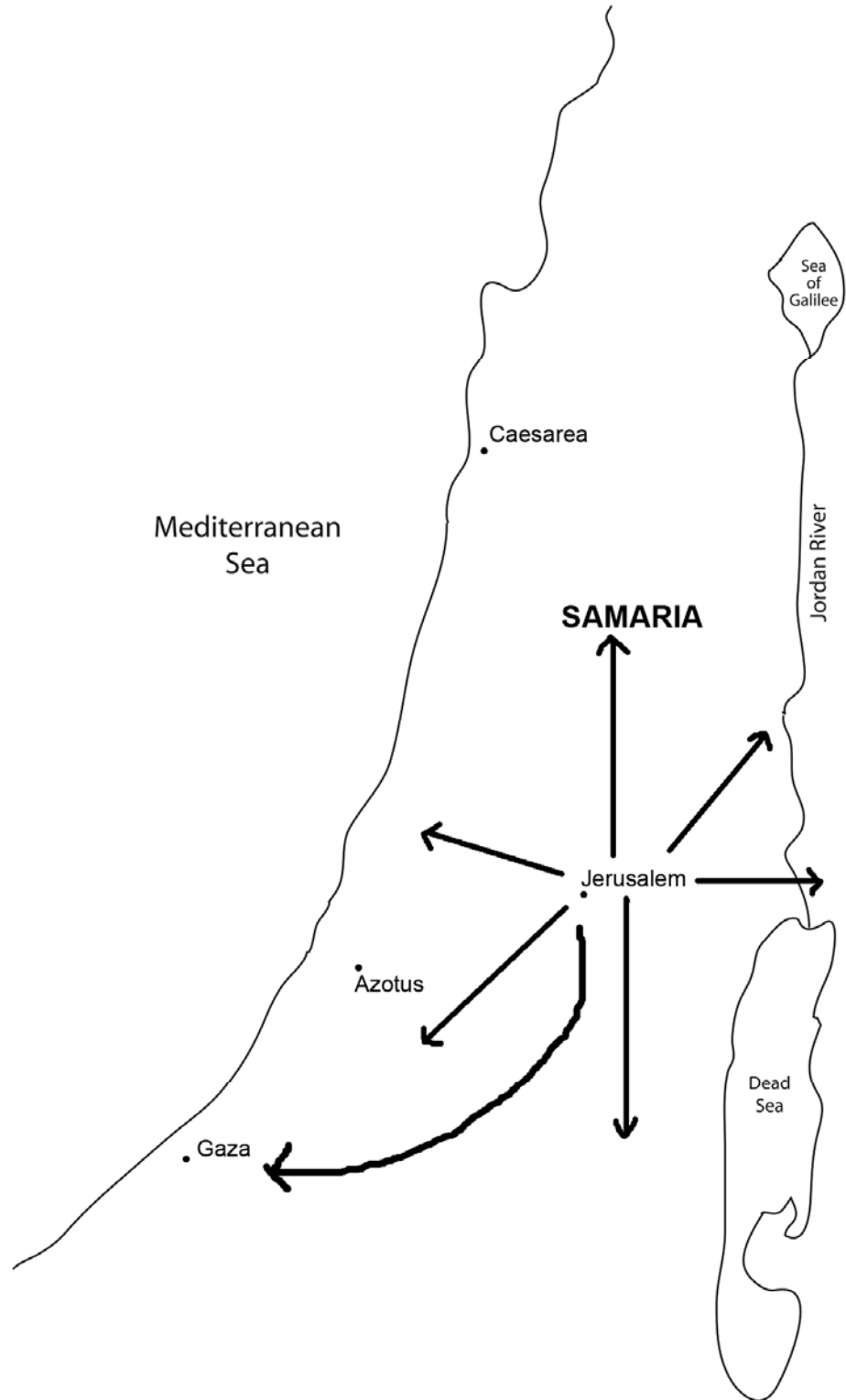
Many believers from Jerusalem moved to other places. Because they believed in the Lord Jesus they were being mistreated. Due to this, they began to spread throughout the country, and with their spreading out God's word began to spread also. Isn't this wonderful? Out of a hard situation something good happened.

The believers were scattered throughout the land. (*use map*) Some went this way, and some went that way, and then some went this way too. And what was so good about that? The good news of the gospel of Jesus was spread to people who might never have heard about it! All the believers would tell the people in their new place about Jesus, so the word of God spread out all over. It was wonderful!

Philip was one who did this. Philip was one of the seven who served the tables in Jerusalem, along with Stephen. He also was one of the ones who scattered out from Jerusalem. Philip moved and spoke the good news of Jesus to those in the new city. When you have some good news, don't you like to tell others about it? Of course you do!

Recently a family I know moved to a new place. They had the practice of having their friends come each Friday to their house for a neighborhood children's meeting. At their new place they decided they would make new friends so that they could have a neighborhood children's meeting again!! These boys had something fun to share with new friends. So, instead of feeling bad about leaving their old friends, they realized that moving was a good thing because now these boys could make new friends and invite them to come to their home for a neighborhood children's meeting.

New Testament Stories



New Testament Stories

Week 23 Not Thinking Too Highly of Ourselves

Point to emphasize: We should be willing to learn from others.

Reference: Acts 8:26-39

Memory verse: Proverbs 1:5

That the wise man may hear and increase in learning, And he who has understanding may acquire sound counsel;

Story sample:

Last week we mentioned Philip. Today I would like to tell you about something Philip did. He was on the road down from Jerusalem to Gaza, in the desert. As he traveled this road, a chariot came along the way. Riding in the chariot was an Ethiopian man, a man of high position in his country. Now, Ethiopia is way down here (*use globe*), It is in today's Africa. So you can see how the good news of Jesus was spreading. (*use globe to show how far it is from Jerusalem to Ethiopia – 1570 miles*)

The Ethiopians were not Jewish people, but this man had heard about God. He had even been to Jerusalem to worship God. He was one who was seeking God. He was on his way home from Jerusalem, and as he rode along in his chariot, he was reading from the Old Testament.

As Philip got near he could hear the man reading from the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament. Philip said to the man, "Do you really know the things that you are reading?"

You might think someone as important as this man might not like such a question. There was no comparison between these two men. Philip was a man who served tables, and the Ethiopian was a man who had servants. Philip was a man who had to walk to get anywhere, and the Ethiopian had his own chariot. This Ethiopian man didn't even know Philip. So a stranger walking along the road was asking him if he understood what he was reading in God's Word. He might have thought, "Who is this man who is speaking to me like this?" Some people might be offended or angry at someone questioning them like this.

One time I started a new job. I had been trained for it but I still didn't know exactly how to do some things. When one of my co-workers would ask if I needed help, I would always say, "No, I'm doing OK". It made me angry that they didn't think I knew what I was doing. BUT I really didn't know what I was doing! I was too proud to admit this to them. It would have been better if I had admitted that I was not sure how to do some things and then receive some help. (*storyteller: use an example of your own, following this pattern*)

This man did not think of himself more highly than Philip. He was willing to receive whatever might help him.

This week, let's all try to learn something from someone else, regardless of who it might be.

New Testament Stories

Week 24 Speaking God's Word

Point to emphasize: We should speak to our friends.

Reference: Acts 8:26-39

Memory verse: Psalm 119:130

The opening of Your words gives light, Imparting understanding to the simple.

Story sample:

Remember last week about Philip asking the Ethiopian a question? He asked him, "Do you really know the things that you are reading?"

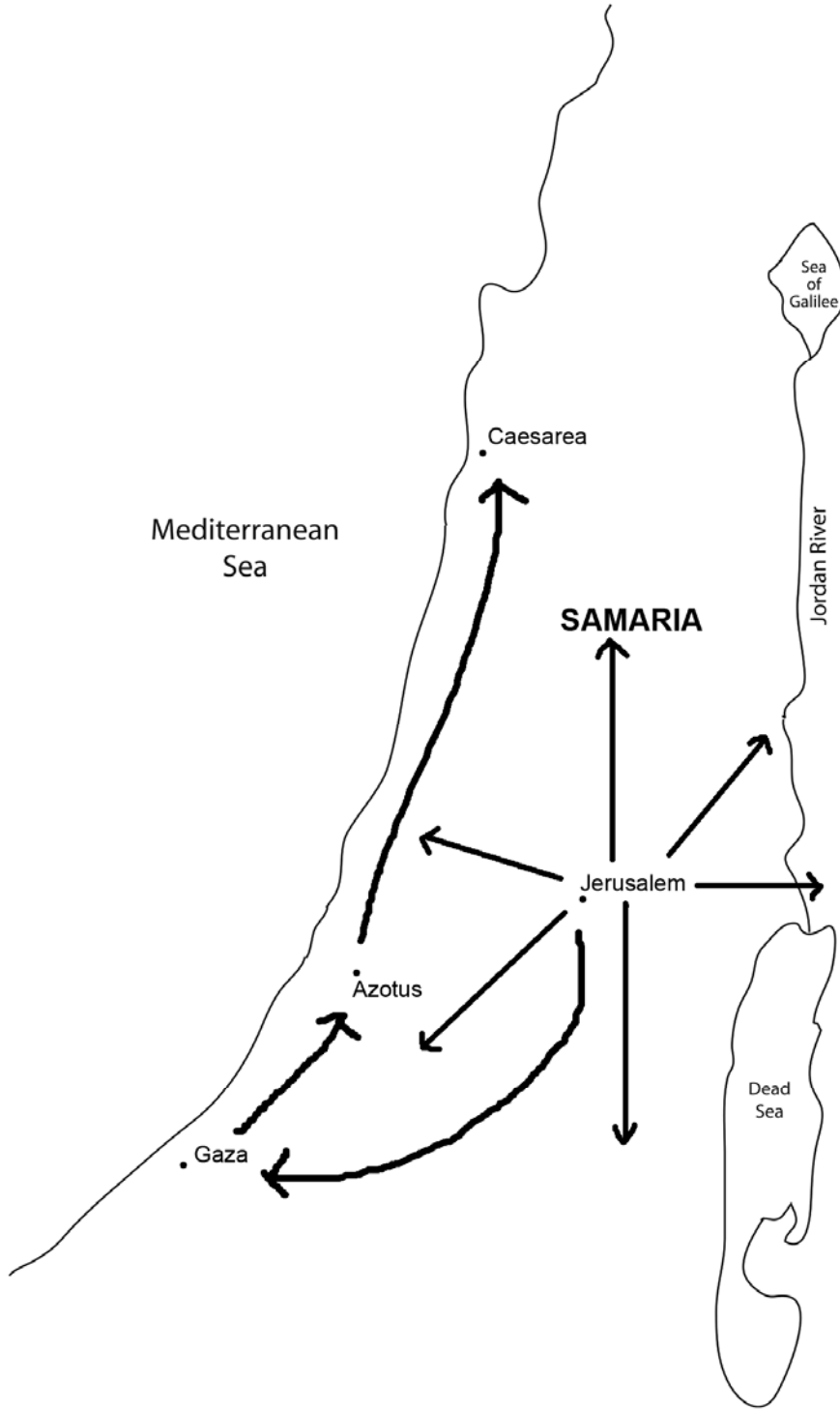
The Ethiopian really wanted to understand what some verses in the Old Testament meant. The Ethiopian answered Philip, "How could I unless someone guides me?" He asked Philip to come sit in the chariot with him and explain what he was reading. He wanted Philip to guide him through his reading of God's Word. The wonderful part was that Philip was able to help this man to know the meaning of what he was reading. Starting with what was written in Isaiah, Philip was able to speak about Jesus to the Ethiopian man. Philip was so happy speak to him and the Ethiopian was so happy to hear this gospel!

As they rode along the road, they passed some water, and the man asked Philip to baptize him. He told Philip that he believed with his whole heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. After this, they stopped the chariot and the Ethiopian was baptized. This is wonderful!

Philip was one who always spoke to others about God. After this, he spoke the word in Azotus, and all the cities until he came to Caesarea. (*use map*) He never stopped speaking the word of God to others!

This is how God's word spreads – by speaking. So we see that the good news about Jesus started in Jerusalem, spread throughout Israel, then went to Africa, and it eventually even came to Anaheim! (*use globe to trace the spread*) It is very wonderful that right now many children in southern California are in children's meetings just like you. They are singing, listening to stories, and enjoying something of God's Word. And some of those children are asking their friends and classmates to come with them to children's meeting or to their homes for NCM. We may not be like Philip in traveling but we can be like him in helping others enjoy what we enjoy.

New Testament Stories



New Testament Stories

Week 25 Review

As much as possible, try to include the children in preparing for and presenting the review. The following are the most important points of each week to emphasize with the children, and a few activity ideas:

Week 22:

We can easily share our children's meetings with others.

Activity: Have the children make an invitation to children's meeting.

Week 23:

We should be willing to learn from others.

Activities: Teach the children a new skill (cross-stitching, building something new); or divide up by twos or threes and have each group teach something new to the others in the group.

Week 24:

We should speak to our friends.

Activity: Divide into pairs and have each group practice speaking the three stories about Philip to one another.

New Testament Stories

Week 26 Being One of God's People

Point to emphasize: We are a part of God's people.

References: Acts 22:3; 26:4-5

Memory verse: Deuteronomy 14:2

For you are a holy people to Jehovah your God, and Jehovah has chosen you to be a people for His personal treasure, from among all the peoples which are upon the face of the earth.

Story sample:

We have had some stories that mention Peter, Stephen and Phillip. Now we come to Saul of Tarsus. Tarsus was a large important city in the Roman Empire 2,000 years ago. There were many Greeks, Romans, and Jews and others from the surrounding area that came to do business in Tarsus. Saul was born in that city.

Saul was not born into a Greek family. Nor was his family a typical Roman family. He was born into a Jewish family. The Jews were a people who belonged to God. They were a unique people. They were not like the rest of the other people in Tarsus. They had God's Word and God's ways. The Greek and Roman families were different because they did not have God's Word. Having God's Word and God's ways is what made Saul's family unique.

Let's see what unique means. If I have the same kind of backpack as 10 other children, is my backpack unique? NO, it would be quite common! But if I used the backpack that my dad used when he went to school - that would be unique. No one else would have one like mine. Sometimes we are unique in what we have, like the backpack. But sometimes we are unique (or different) from others in what we do.

One time when I was in a nice restaurant, our food came and our family prayed to thank the Lord. Others close to our table could hear us giving our thanks to the Lord. As we prayed at our table we became unique. No one else in the restaurant had done this while we were there. We were the only ones who gave thanks to God. This made us unique.

*(****storyteller - give one simple example similar to this about yourself or your family. Ask one child to raise their hand and share something about being very special.)*

Many things about Saul's family life as a Jew made him unique. Since we are a part of a family that has God's Word, many things in our family life are different from other families. These differences are good! It shows that our families have God's Word!

*(***depending on the age of your children you can discuss some matters of their family life that makes them unique. Such matters as having parents who go to prayer meetings, singing songs about God, saying verses with family members, and even being restricted by parents from some activities.)*

New Testament Stories

Week 27 Taking the Opportunity to Learn

Point to emphasize: We must take the opportunity to spend the time to learn.

References: Acts 22:3; 26:4-5

Memory verse: Proverbs 21:5

The plans of the diligent lead only to plentifulness, but everyone who is hasty comes only to want.

Story sample:

Since Saul was growing up in such an important city, he had the opportunity to receive a very good education. In a city like Tarsus, which had a university, you could easily be taught math and science and different languages. If you were raised in a small town you would not have these kinds of educational opportunities. As Saul grew up he probably learned Hebrew and Aramaic since they are probably what his family spoke. He learned to read and to write in both languages, too. He was able to read and study the Old Testament in Hebrew. He also learned at least two other languages. He learned to speak, read, and write Greek - this was the language used by the Greek people. He was probably taught Greek at school in Tarsus. Most likely he also knew Latin, since this was the language used by the Romans who governed the Roman Empire.

(Show picture of languages)

To have the opportunity to do something and to seize the opportunity are two different matters.

Some of you already speak two languages. Some speak English but at home you may speak Chinese/Korean/Spanish/Vietnamese with your family. This is like Saul. His family spoke Hebrew so he had the way to learn it. But in Tarsus it was good to learn Greek since it was a common language used in Tarsus. Saul's surroundings made it easier to learn three languages - just like some of your environments make it easier to learn English and Spanish. BUT Saul went further. He applied himself and learned to also read and write in the other languages. How many of us can both read and write in our "home" language? *(ask 1 or 2 of the children)* We have the opportunity but do not take full advantage of it. We need to apply diligence to read and write in more than one language.

We can all wish that by the time we grow up we will be able to speak, read and write in two languages BUT nothing comes by wishing. How can we learn to read or write the second language? *(ask the children)* One way is to read and write in that second language every day. Let's all try this week to learn some alphabets in Greek, Phoenician, and Hebrew. Each of us can take home this paper and each day have our mom/dad write several alphabets for us to practice translating into the other languages. (Serving ones should make enough copies to hand them out to the children who would like to learn the different alphabets.)

Saul probably learned the languages by practicing every day.

New Testament Stories

The three Alphabets known and read by Saul

Latin	Greek	Phoenician Ancient Hebrew	Aramaic/Hebrew
A	Α <i>alpha</i>	𐤀	<i>aleph</i> א
B	Β <i>beta</i>	𐤁	<i>bet</i> ב
C	Γ <i>gamma</i>	𐤂	<i>gimel</i> ג
D	Δ <i>delta</i>	𐤃	<i>dalet</i> ד
E	Ε <i>epsilon</i>	𐤄	<i>he</i> ה
F	– Ƒ	𐤅	<i>waw</i> ו
G	Ζ <i>zeta</i>	𐤆	<i>zayin</i> ז
H	Η <i>eta</i>	𐤇	<i>het</i> ח
	Θ <i>theta</i>	𐤈	<i>tet</i> ט
I	Ι <i>iota</i>	𐤉	<i>yod</i> י
[J]	–	–	–
K	Κ <i>kappa</i>	𐤊	<i>kaph</i> כ
L	Λ <i>lambda</i>	𐤋	<i>lamed</i> ל
M	Μ <i>mu</i>	𐤌	<i>Mem</i> מ
N	Ν <i>nu</i>	𐤍	<i>mun</i> נ
	Ξ <i>xi</i>	𐤎	<i>samech</i> ס
O	Ο <i>omicron</i>	𐤏	<i>ayin</i> ע
P	Π <i>pi</i>	𐤐	<i>pe</i> פ
	– ϱ	𐤑	<i>tsade</i> צ
Q	– ϕ	𐤒	<i>qof</i> ק
R	Ρ <i>rho</i>	𐤓	<i>resh</i> ר
S	Σ <i>sigma</i>	𐤔	<i>shin</i> ש
T	Τ <i>tau</i>	𐤕	<i>tav</i> ת
U		–	–
V	Υ <i>upsilon</i>	–	–
[W]	Φ <i>phi</i>	–	–
X	Χ <i>chi</i>	–	–
[Y]	Ψ <i>psi</i>	–	–
	Ω <i>omega</i>	–	–
Z		–	–
26 letters	24 letters	22 letters	22 letters

New Testament Stories

Week 28 Treasuring God's Word

Point to emphasize: We must take the opportunity to memorize God's Word.

References: Acts 22:3; 26:4-5

Memory verse: Psalm 119:140

Your word is very pure, and Your servant loves it.

Story sample:

As Saul grew up he became more and more different from the Greeks and the Roman boys in a very important way. As Saul grew, he loved God, he loved the Jewish ways, and he loved God's Word. I know many of us memorize a verse a week but Saul memorized chapters, not just a single verse. In his family, Saul would memorize God's Word. Then, as a young boy he went to a special class with other Jewish boys and there they memorized God's Word. They would not just work on memorizing it once. Week after week they would recite long portions from the first five books of the Bible until they knew it by heart. WOW!! We may think he could do this because he was really, really smart. Yes, he was smart but it took more than just being smart. Saul must have been diligent and even aggressive to learn God's Word. He could not have been half hearted. He must have done it with his whole being. So by the time he was older he was able to go and study under a very famous teacher of God's Word.

Do you put all your effort into memorizing your verse each week; or is it just something you have to get through and then it is over? Some of us are this way with schoolwork, too. We get an assignment at school to do a project. Sadly we don't put too much time or energy into it. We are rather lazy. Instead of being diligent to read, study the subject and work on the project, we do just enough to turn it in to the teacher. It is amazing how much time we waste yet not taking adequate time doing things in a proper way. Sometimes we don't focus our whole attention on what we are studying; rather we let our mind wander to other things. *(***storyteller - insert story of how you applied yourself to a project and reaped the benefit.)*

When you love a certain topic or activity you pursue it. Some children love to make things. I know a boy who started when he was very young putting things together. He invented things and made them. By the time he was in high school he designed and made one of those airplanes that you fly by remote. He did not just get a kit with directions; NO! He was aggressive to learn and do it himself from scratch. He got books on it, talked to others that loved these kinds of planes and researched how to do it. He gave his time and energy and even his money to get into it. He had determination. By doing this he was able to learn a lot and build a remote airplane. Isn't that something! Now, could one who was lazy or half-hearted have done such a thing? *(***storyteller-please share a similar story of a child who showed determination and aggressiveness to learn and apply himself to a task.)*

New Testament Stories

Week 29 Working with Our Hands

Point to emphasize: We must take the opportunity to learn to do all kinds of useful skills.

References: Acts 18:13

Memory verse: Galatians 6:4a-5

But let each man prove his own work, . . . for each one shall bear his own load.

Story sample:

Saul must have been diligent and even aggressive to learn God's Word. By the time Saul was older he was able to study under a very famous teacher of God's Word. Today this would be like being the best student in the best university.

Saul also learned a trade. To learn a trade is to learn to work with your hands. Some of the trades that people learn and work at today are plumbers, bakers, butchers, carpenters, electricians, mechanics, printers, etc.

Saul became a tentmaker. (*show a picture of a tent today in the US and one from the middle east*) This is the kind of tent most of us have seen or used when going camping, but this is the kind that people used in Saul's time. They were made of goat's hair and/or woven materials and/or leather. No one could go into a store and buy everything they needed to make a tent. You had to start from scratch and make everything yourself. It was difficult work and it took skill to sew it together. The tent had to be durable. It was going to be someone's movable home. It could not be done in a sloppy or careless way. To be a tentmaker meant you spent hours, days and weeks toiling in hard manual labor. Nothing was easy or exciting about it. But there is a satisfaction in doing things with our hands.

What kinds of things can we start to learn to do with our hands?

Here are just a few:

Sewing on a button, Frying an egg, Checking the pressure in a bicycle tire (& patching a tire), Changing the vacuum cleaner bag, hammering a nail

Today we are going to see if we all can learn to patch a bike tire (or add air to a bike tire, or learn how to use a screw driver, or sew on a button, etc.).

We need to be learning how to read and do math, but we also need to be able to do so many things with our hands, too.

New Testament Stories

Week 30 Not Harming Others

Point to emphasize: Even though we disagree with others we should not harm them.

References: Acts 9:1-2; 22:3-5

Memory verse: Matthew 5:44b

. . . Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you,

Story sample:

By the time Saul was a young man, the most important thing in his life was the Jewish religion. He learned to speak and read different languages so that he could read God's Word. He had the best education. The Bible even speaks about how he was a student of Gamaliel. Gamaliel was a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin. He was a teacher of God's law and was honored by all the people because of his devotion to God and his knowledge of the scriptures. Saul must have been a top student to have been able to study under this man!

Saul became a Pharisee (the strictest of the Jews according to the Law). He loved God very much and followed the Jewish religion. Do you remember what you do when you love something and believe in it just as strongly? Of course, you stand up for it. So when trouble came, Saul stood up to defend the Jewish religion. At this time all the trouble came from the Jews because they would not believe that Jesus was the Son of God.

Some of the people who were believing into Jesus were called Christians. At that time many Jews were poorly treating anyone who became a Christian. Saul along with many other Jews started fighting for their religion. BUT they began fighting against the Christians. They were causing these believers to be harmed! Does that sound right! NO!!

Let's think about this. My parents never allowed me to go hit somebody else. They never would say, "Go ahead hit that person." Well, if my folks won't let me do that, surely my God would not like it either.

Sometimes we are so angry that we really don't think about our actions. One time someone called me a name and I got so angry that I punched him. Then he struck back! I was wrong to punch him in the first place. Fighting them did not accomplish anything. What could I have done instead? (*have a talk with the kids about this*). But the best thing to do is to go home and talk with your folks about it.

New Testament Stories

Week 31 REVIEW

This week is a review of the previous five weeks. As an idea, invite one of the families of the children in your group to come review the stories about Saul. This will need to be done ahead of time. Give the family a set of the outlines and ask them to present the stories, with each member of the family presenting one part. Remind them to keep the emphasized points in mind as they plan. Encourage them to give personal examples to strengthen the stories.

New Testament Stories

Week 32 Admitting He was Wrong

Point to emphasize: We should admit it when we are wrong.

References: Acts 22:3-11; 26:10-15

Memory verse: Leviticus 25:17

And you shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am Jehovah your God.

Story sample:

Saul was so much against the Christians that he was traveling to other cities to persecute (to treat someone cruelly or unfairly because of that person's beliefs) them. He and some others were going to Damascus. It was about midday when this group got close to Damascus. Suddenly, a great light flashed around them. The light was so forceful, so intense, that it caused them all to fall to the ground. *(**note-there is no mention that they were riding or walking on the road)* As they were all on the ground, Saul heard a voice out of heaven saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" *(**NOTE-do not give spiritual explanations of who the "Me" is.)*

Saul knew for sure that it was the Lord who was speaking to him. It was at this time that Saul learned and believed that Jesus was Lord.

Right there Saul had a decision to make. He was heading to Damascus to persecute a bunch of people that he thought were against the God that he knew, against the Jewish religion that he loved. Right then he had to decide what to do. Would he continue on to Damascus with a heart full of hate for these believers OR would he decide to admit that he had been wrong?

Many times I have had to decide to admit that I have been wrong. There have been times when I have been shown just as clearly as Saul was shown how wrong he was, YET I don't admit how wrong I am when I should. Instead of admitting my wrongness I sound out my excuses and I stay angry.

One time I was with a girl who was purposely misbehaving. When the group was asked to sit in chairs, she went and sat on a table. When the group was paired up for a game, she ducked under the table. But when confronted with her wrongness she would not admit it. She was just doing what she wanted to do. It is so sad when we do not admit that we are wrong. *(***Storyteller please give your own story of not admitting you were wrong and possibly the consequence to yourself and others)*

Or, if mom says, "Stop throwing the pillows off the couch," do you say, "Sorry, mom" or do you say, "BUT he was doing it first!?" See how easy it is to be caught but not admit we are wrong?

New Testament Stories

Saul must have admitted to himself that he had been very, very wrong because he never made one excuse. He never pointed the finger at someone else. He was there laying on the road fully knowing that he was wrong, wrong, wrong. He only said, "What shall I do, Lord?"

We all can be like Saul in a good way. When we do what is wrong, we can admit that we were wrong, and not make excuses for ourselves. Then we can ask, "What shall I do?" This shows that we are truly sorry and willing to take the right way.

New Testament Stories

Week 33 Admitting He was Wrong Changed Saul

Point to emphasize: There should be a difference in our heart and actions once we admit we are wrong.

References: Acts 9:11-19; 22:3-11; 26:10-15

Memory verse: Proverbs 3:29a
Do not devise harm against your neighbor.

Story sample:

Since Saul now admitted that he was wrong the voice from heaven told him to enter into the city. Saul had planned to go into that same city but in a much different way. Before he admitted he was wrong he was so proud of what he was doing. But now he had been changed.

After entering into the city Saul was considering what had occurred on the road. He was really affected by knowing how wrong he had been. He was in Damascus for three days without seeing anything. During these three days Saul did not have the heart to eat or drink anything.

One time a girl had to be taken out of a group of children and scolded for being so naughty. Afterward she did not say much but she did not go back and join her friends. She felt bad inside and knew she had been wrong so she could not just go and join back in. Her heart was still heavy. (****storyteller- please insert your own story along these lines.*)

When we admit we are wrong it changes the way we feel. It is always hard for me to admit that I have been wrong. Oh, my heart feels so heavy when I realize how bad I have acted. I wonder, "How could I act that way?" This is actually good for me. I should not think I am so great. To admit that I have been wrong helps me a lot.

I hope some of you know this, too. Maybe you had a time last week when you admitted that you were wrong and did not feel so good about yourself. But after a while your heart feels so much better and you are SO glad that you admitted you were wrong and said that you were sorry.

New Testament Stories

Week 34 One Who was Well Attested

Point to emphasize: Practice now so that you can be well attested when you are older.

References: Acts 9:11-19; 22:12-16

Memory verse: Psalm 31:23

Love Jehovah, all you who are His faithful ones; Jehovah guards the trustworthy...

Story sample:

There was a man named Ananias living in Damascus when Saul of Tarsus was heading there. This man was not famous in any way. BUT, he was one who loved and followed the Lord Jesus. He was a disciple of Jesus and the Bible says that he was well attested. Well attested means that when others consider how you conduct yourself (what you do and say), they regard you highly. There was a boy in my folks' neighborhood who would help them out by watering the lawn and collecting the mail when they were away. He did it faithfully. This made my folks highly regard him. (****storyteller-please tell your own story of a child whose conduct made him well attested.*)

When I was younger I did some volunteer work at a school for handicapped children. At first, all the volunteers did easy tasks like taking notes to the office. As the staff got to know us better, we were given more responsible tasks. Then, among the volunteers, some, the well attested ones, got to really help out with these children. All the other volunteers only continued doing easier tasks. Not everyone was well attested. Only the well attested, those who showed that they were more careful and responsible, were asked to do more. (***dear storyteller: please tell a story of a child who was well attested and was asked to carry something out.*)

In the New Testament we first heard about Stephen, who was well attested so the apostles asked him to do something. Now we have Ananias who is well attested and he is being asked to do something. The Lord asked him to go and speak to Saul. All the believers in Damascus had heard of this name - Saul of Tarsus. They knew that he was against them and might even hurt them.

But the Lord told Ananias to go and to speak to this Saul of Tarsus. Ananias did exactly what the Lord said and entered into the house where Saul was and spoke to Saul. Saul received his sight and was baptized. He also ate some food and was strengthened. How encouraged Saul must have been to meet this disciple of the Lord!

It is interesting that being well attested usually involves how faithful we are in taking care things for others. Can you find a hidden four-letter word hiding inside the word well attested? (*test*) That is right: **t-e-s-t**. Ananias was on the test when the Lord spoke to him to go to Saul of Tarsus. Sometimes it may be difficult to be dependable, trustworthy, and consistent. But when we are this way, like always picking up our toys, always helping to set the table, doing our chores, or helping others when there is a need, we become someone who is well attested. Do you think you can become well attested in only one day? NO! It takes some time to prove that you can be found faithful in a number of different things to show that you are someone who has become well attested.

New Testament Stories

Week 35 Needing Help

Point to emphasize: We can help others

Reference: Acts 9:20-30

Memory verse: Ephesians 4:32

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another...

Story sample:

There was a change in Saul after he was baptized. Now, instead of persecuting the believers, Saul went out to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues. All who heard him were amazed! They could not believe that this was the same man who had earlier threatened to bind and imprison anyone who was a follower of Jesus. One hour Saul of Tarsus is one kind of person and the next he is totally a different person! Yet time after time in the synagogues Saul would confound them by using the Old Testament to prove that Jesus was the Christ.

After a period of time the leaders of the Jews in Damascus decided to do away with Saul. They did not like his speaking about Jesus. Saul was in real danger!

In those days the cities had walls surrounding them. You had to enter or leave the city through a gate. So it was easy to catch someone by posting watches at the gates day and night. Saul found out about their plot so he did not use the gates in the city. But still he was stuck. He had no way out.

What did Saul need? He needed some friends to help him out. His friends let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.

One time I was in a spot. I was out in the garage one day looking for my softball mitt. I must have thrown it behind some shelves in the garage. I tried to reach behind the shelves to get it and in doing it I accidentally knocked the shelves over. It was a BIG mess. And besides that, the shelf was too heavy for me to lift by myself. I didn't want my mom to come home and have to clean up the mess I had made, but there was no way I could do it all by myself. Just as I was about to start crying about it, my next door neighbor Helen showed up. She had heard the noise of the shelf falling and came to see what had happened. When she saw the mess, she went back home and got her big brother to come over and help lift the shelf. Then she helped me put everything back on the shelf. It's good to have a friend who will help you when you are in a spot!
*(**storyteller: please insert your own story about friends coming up with a solution to help you out)*

Did Saul have any friends in Damascus? He had come here to persecute the followers of Jesus. And now it was the believers who came to his aid and got him out of the city. At night, when it was very dark, they took Saul to the wall and lowered him down through the wall in a basket. They helped him and saved his life.

New Testament Stories

Week 36 Forgiving Others

Point to emphasize: We can forgive and forget

Reference: Acts 9:20-30

Memory verse: Colossians 3:13b

Bearing one another and forgiving one another, if anyone should have a complaint against anyone; ... so also should you forgive.

Story sample:

At the start of his journey Saul was going to bind the very people who now saved his life by letting him down through the wall in a basket. Have you ever heard of someone helping a former enemy like this?

It's hard to forgive someone who has been mean to you. And it's even harder sometimes to forget about it. Have you ever known someone who was mean to you? When I was in school, there was a boy who was always mean to me. He called me names and laughed at me when I was on the playground. I didn't like him very much. One day, as I walked home from school, I saw him lying on the ground. His bike had hit a rock and he fell off onto the street. His books were everywhere and his knee was bleeding. What do you think I did? I could have just laughed at him or called him clumsy, because that's probably what he would have done for me. But instead, I forgot about all the mean things he had done to me and saw that he was hurting and needed help. I had some tissues in my pocket so I gave it to him to wipe off the blood, and then helped him pick up his books. I felt better for forgiving and forgetting! *(storyteller - please insert your own story about forgiving someone who was not nice or pleasant to you. Maybe you even ended up helping him/her)*

After being let down in the basket, Saul went to Jerusalem. Of course, the believers in Jerusalem only knew the Saul who had been persecuting them. When Saul tried to come together with the other believers, they were all afraid that he was coming to imprison them. Finally, Barnabas took him to the apostles and explained that Saul had seen the Lord on the way to Damascus and now proclaimed Jesus. Saul was now accepted by the believers in Jerusalem. He spoke boldly and disputed with the Jews; and again the Jews plotted to do away with him. Some of the believers found out about this plot and sent Saul away to another city.

Once again Saul needed someone to help him. Without help the Jews would catch him. Some brothers from Jerusalem helped Saul escape. These were the ones he had wanted to bind up and throw into prison! And now they were saving his life. These believers just forgave Saul and forgot he had once been an enemy and then helped him out.

BUT, what about you and me? Is forgiving and forgetting so easy? One time when I was younger I said something not so nice about a friend to someone else. The minute I said it I was so sorry. When my friend found out they were so upset with me. No matter how

New Testament Stories

often I said I was sorry, they really never forgave me. They would not forgive nor forget what I had said. (****storyteller - please tell your own story along this line, hitting this same point.*)

How careful we must be in our speaking and how important it is to forgive and forget.

New Testament Stories

Week 37 REVIEW

This week is a review of the previous five weeks. Try to have the children involved in the review as much as possible, especially concerning the practical application.

As a possible idea, divide them into five teams and have each team review one week for 15-20 minutes. Then present it to the others at the end of the time. They could recite the verse, sing a song, and/or tell a portion of the story.

Keep the emphasized points in mind as you plan.

New Testament Stories

Week 38 Being Determined to Help

Point to emphasize: We should give our time, energy and things to help others.

Reference: Acts 11:19-30

Memory verse: Matthew 5:7

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy.

Story sample:

While Barnabas and Saul were in Antioch they, along with the other disciples, heard that there would be a famine in Judah. Right away they determined to send things to the brothers dwelling in Judah. They were quick to respond to others' needs. Right away they felt they needed to do something to help. (***storyteller-please tell your own story about responding right away to help someone out.*)

Sending money would not help in a famine because even if you had money you could not find grains, fruits, or veggies to buy. So the brothers in Antioch determined to send things. What kind of things? Food! It is interesting that the Bible says that they DETERMINED (*write on the board*) to send things. If something is going to be easy to do, then you do not need to determine. If you love math and it seems so easy to you, then you will not need to determine to do your math homework. But if spelling seems so hard to you, then you have to determine to do it.

So the brothers had to DETERMINE to send things because it would not be an easy task. First of all, these brothers were not rich or well off. If they sent some things it would not be extra things but things they really needed for themselves. They committed their time, effort, and own materials so that they could supply others.

One time when I was in high school there was an earthquake in LA. And some older buildings had to be torn down because they were too damaged by the quake. I was with a group of Christian young people and we volunteered to help salvage the bricks from some of those buildings. The bricks were still very usable even though the buildings were not. So, for many weeks we spent our Saturdays chipping away the old mortar on these bricks so that they could be used again. We brought our own lunches and water and worked the whole day. It was hard work out in the hot sun. But somehow our hearts were touched by the need of others, so week after week we gave our Saturdays up to help others we did not even know. (****storyteller-please insert your own story of responding to the need of others.*)

Have you or your family ever determined to help others?

New Testament Stories

Week 39 Accepting Who We are Grouped With

Point to emphasize: We can learn to accept our situation.

Reference: Acts 13:1-4

Memory verse: Hebrews 13:17a

Obey the ones leading you and submit to them, . . .

Story sample:

I remember when I was in third grade and our class at school was put into different teams to play a game. Some of the children were really upset because their best friends were not on their same team. They got put with children in the class that they never really played with at recess. *(***storyteller-please tell a story about being grouped with those who were not your preference).*

Well, in the church in the city of Antioch there were a group of five brothers who were put together. They did not choose each other; rather they were grouped together to teach. Since these five came from different places around the Mediterranean Sea and were raised in different kinds of families, would we expect that they had much in common? No, they had really different backgrounds and probably spoke one or more different languages. They had different colors of skin, too. There were lots of differences.

But when they got grouped together not one of them said, "Oh, I don't want to teach with him. He is not my good friend." Or "I don't want to be with this one. He does not even have the same skin color as me." Or "He is from a poor family. I don't want to be with him." No, none of them acted like this. They each just accepted the arrangement. They were grouped together, so they worked together.

Accepting an arrangement is a big matter. When we accept an arrangement it means we admit that we are not the one in charge. We are not the boss. Someone else is choosing the teams or arranging the groups, not me. I can decide to accept it or not to accept it. *(***storyteller-please tell your story of accepting an arrangement because you knew you were not the boss)*

New Testament Stories

Week 40 Following Through Even When It Is Difficult

Point to emphasize: We should learn to follow through.

Reference: Acts 13:4-6a

Memory verse: 1 Corinthians 15:58b

...be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Story Sample:

Today we start a story of three men who were making a long and hard journey together. And they had a definite purpose in their journey. Let's see if all three of them make it to the end.

Barnabas and Saul went down to Seleucia and caught a boat sailing to the island of Cyprus. They also had John Mark, a cousin of Barnabas, along with them as an attendant (helper). They were going out to speak the good news, the gospel about Jesus Christ as their Savior and they didn't plan to give up and quit.

Salamis was the first place they visited. They landed and went into the city. But Barnabas and Saul did not come to visit this city to see the sights; they came to share the word of God. So these two, along with John Mark, went to the synagogues in the city and preached the word to all who would listen. This was not the first time that the good news of Jesus Christ had been announced in this city. Others had come earlier, so there were already believers here.

So far the trip had been easy for them, so there was no reason to quit, was there? That's how it was for me in school. As long as it was easy to learn math, I would never quit taking math classes. There was no reason to quit because it was so easy. *(***storyteller use your own example of something being so easy)*

From Salamis they traveled through out the whole island, stopping in each place to share the word of God as they proceeded to the city Paphos. *(show map)* On the map it looks like a short distance, doesn't it? You might think that Paphos is just down the block from Salamis because they look so close to each other on the map. But the two cities are about 100 miles apart. If you drove in a car on a good road you could easily get from one city to the other in two hours. But how did these three get from here to here? They did not have a car. It could be that they walked a lot of the way.

Now walking a block or two is very easy for us. Most of you can run or skip or jump for a block without any problem. So walking doesn't sound hard. But they walked for miles and miles and miles. Instead of just walking for 10 or 15 minutes they may have walked for hours in the sun. What would happen if it rained and you were out walking for a while? Is walking for hours pleasant or fun? No, walking for hours can make you tired, thirsty and can make your feet hurt. But they still didn't quit! They were going all the

New Testament Stories

way to Paphos. (***Story teller-tell your own story about walking a long distance and having to decide to keep going even though you got tired.*)

And eventually they did follow through on their plan and made it to Paphos. And because of this an important man in that city believed the gospel about Jesus. Isn't that wonderful? I'm so glad they followed through and didn't quit!

New Testament Stories



New Testament Stories

Week 41 Don't Be a Quitter

Point to emphasize: We must learn not to quit.

Reference: Acts 13:13

Memory verse: Psalm 112:6,7

. . . The righteous man will be remembered forever...His heart is steadfast, trusting in Jehovah.

Story sample:

After they left Paphos, Paul and his two companions caught a ship headed for an area known as Pamphylia. *(show shaded area on map)* This whole area was known for having rivers and mountains. Today rivers and mountains don't cause us much trouble in the place we live. We have bridges that take us over rivers and tunnels that take roads right through mountains. But for those traveling at this time, rivers and mountains meant hardships in traveling. It could even be dangerous. You could be swept away by the current in the river as you tried to cross over. Or there could be a rockslide in the mountains that came down on you. The mountains were high which meant you walked in the cold with ice and snow at times. Oh, the cold wind blowing from the mountains was harsh. All of which meant hard, hard going. It was far from easy to travel in this area. It also had robbers, dangerous robbers!

Everyone knew that the travel ahead would not be easy. It would be hard and it might even be dangerous.

Now, when you are doing something easy, no one ever thinks about quitting. But what about when it gets hard? It is easy to give up and quit then. When I was young I did really well in math. It was easy for me. But after grade school it got harder and by the time I was in high school math was really hard for me. Many times I was ready to give up and quit. I did not really need to learn that hard math. So why should I keep taking those hard classes? But I refused to quit. I did not want to be a quitter just because it was hard. So I kept taking math all the way through school.. *(***storyteller-please tell your own story about not giving up when something was hard. Hopefully it will be something from your childhood. Maybe it will be quitting piano lessons, etc.)*

And this was where Paul, Barnabas and John Mark were headed *(show on map)*. Doesn't sound like such a great place to visit, does it? But they were not out to take a vacation. Paul and Barnabas had been sent out for the gospel. That is why they were going there. So they sailed from Paphos and came to Perga. *(show map)*

Now, even if I let you guess and guess and guess, I am sure that no one would be able to tell me what happened in Perga. *(you might let 1 or 2 guess)* John Mark left Paul and Barnabas. He was supposed to travel with them as their attendant but at Perga he left; he quit the trip. He decided to head back to Jerusalem where things were easy. WOW!

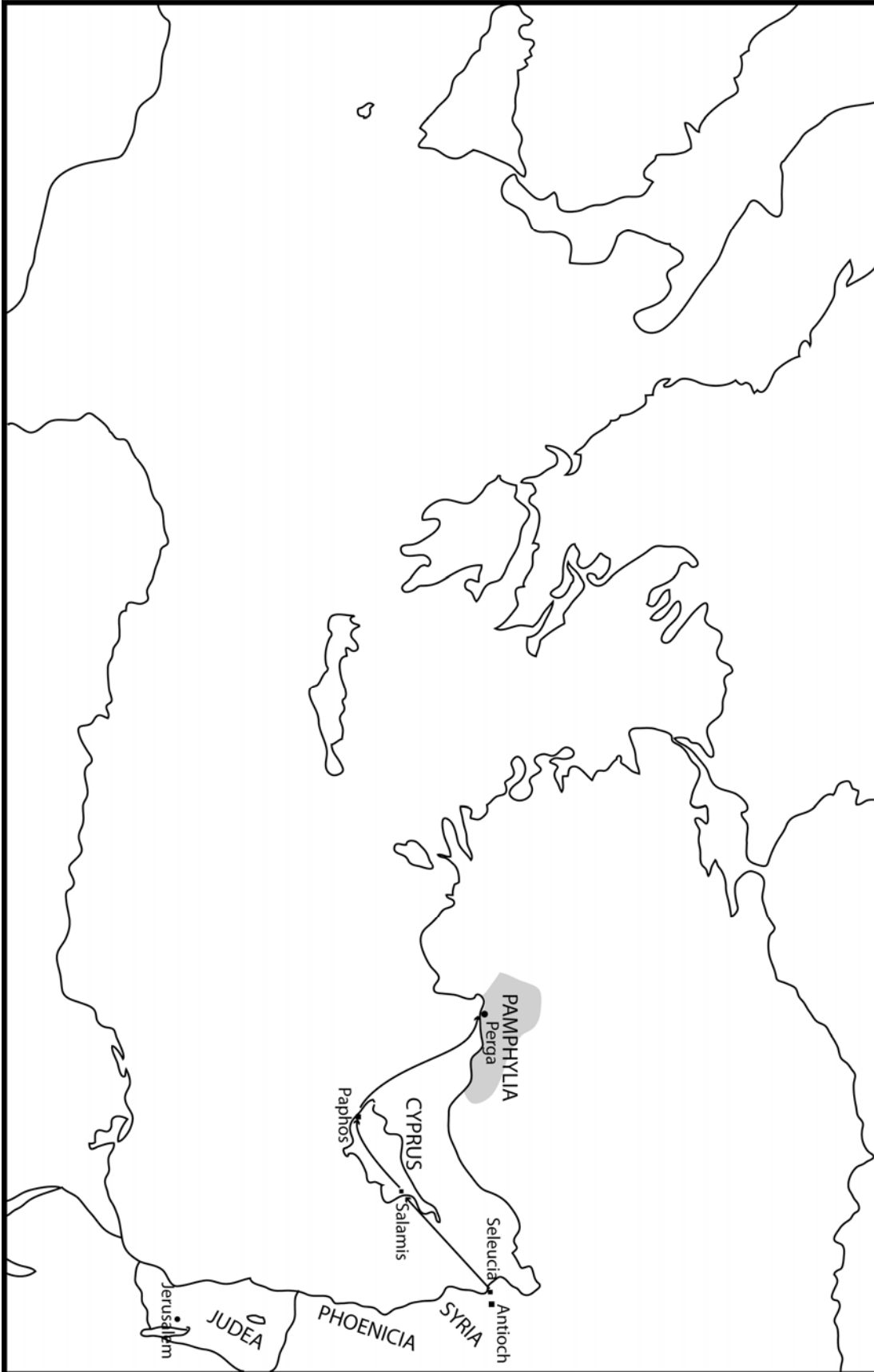
New Testament Stories

Can you believe that? No one knows for sure why he left because the Bible doesn't say, but it is pretty sure that he just could not take the thought of all the hardships he would have to endure as they traveled through Pamphylia.

Do you think that Paul and Barnabas quit just because John Mark did? Sometimes that can happen. *(give an example of a time when someone gave up on a project at school and you had the choice to either quit too or finish the project)*

Paul and Barnabas were not quitters. They knew how hard the travel would be but they were steadfast in their plan.

New Testament Stories



New Testament Stories

Week 42 Jealousy

Point to emphasize: We should not become jealous.

Reference: Acts 13:4-52

Memory verse: Romans 13:13

Let us walk becomingly as in the day; ...not in strife and jealousy.

Story sample:

Paul and Barnabas traveled on without John Mark. They kept going until they reached their destination. Once there they began speaking about Jesus Christ. Paul spoke quite a good word to a group of Jews and the people begged that he would speak to them again on the next Sabbath.

Paul's speaking must have been GREAT for them to beg him to speak again. It is only when we really, really enjoy something that we beg for it again. One time many years ago I read a very cute children's book to a two and three year old. They were pretty young to sit and listen to a book but they loved the story. Each time I would finish it they would beg for me to read it again, right away. Now, if that storybook had been boring do you think that they would have begged me to read it again? NO! That storybook had to be great for them to beg me to read it again and again and again. If you had walked into that room those children would not have paid attention to you. They were so caught up with hearing the story.

And this is the way these people reacted to Paul's speaking. They were excited by what they heard. They BEGGED him to speak to them again.

The Bible says that the whole city gathered together to hear. Most of the people were looking forward to hearing Paul speak, but not everyone felt that way. That week when everyone went around talking about Paul's speaking, some became jealous. They became jealous because no one was talking about how good they spoke. No one was praising them or looking forward to their speaking. All the attention was going to this Paul.

Jealousy seems to crop up in us when someone else is getting all the attention. It may be at school when all the class does projects. One or two projects seem to draw all the attention and some who don't get the attention get jealous. Sometimes even a new baby in the family can cause the older children to get jealous. . Somehow we always want to be the center of attention. ****story teller-insert your own story about how you/someone got jealous.*

****end this story by talking with the children about what we can do so that we do not get jealous. Do not give any spiritual answers, such as calling on the Lord. Give answers like - go and talk to your folks or an older sibling about why you are jealous. Talk to God about why you are jealous.*

New Testament Stories

Week 43 Idolizing

Point to emphasize: We should not idolize others.

Reference: Acts 14:6-21

Memory verse: Hebrews 5:4a

And no one takes the honor upon himself, but only as he is called by God, . . .

Story sample:

Paul and Barnabas traveled on. There are many things that took place as they journeyed but today I only want to tell you the story of what occurred in Lystra. Lystra was a different kind of city than some of the others they had visited. In all their traveling, so far Lystra was the first place where a synagogue or Jews were not mentioned. Now, a synagogue was the place the Jews would go to worship God. The outstanding feature of the people who lived in Lystra was that they did not know God at all. This city was full of people who worshipped idols - things that were not God.

Paul and Barnabas came to this city to announced Jesus as the Lord.

A certain man was sitting and listening to Paul's speaking. Now, this man was sitting because he was lame. He had never walked. But as Paul was speaking the gospel this man was listening. Paul looked at him and saw that this lame man had faith; he believed and received what Paul had to say. Paul said to him "Stand upright on your feet." And the man leaped up and began to walk.

Suddenly those in the crowd who had seen what Paul had done cried out that Paul was like one of the many gods/idols that they worshipped. The people wanted to worship Paul. They were idolizing him.

****discuss with the children what it mean to idolize a person? (it means to regard them highly above others. To admire them too much!)*

The crowd wanted to make Paul and Barnabas something that they were not. Paul and Barnabas were the same as you and me. It was only God who was extraordinary. And they knew that all of the praise and thanks should go to God.

Today many people idolize someone who plays a sport or sings really well BUT really we should not overly admire or exalt any person. They may do things well but there is no need for us to be overly excited about them. They are merely people like us. They are not better or higher or of more value to God than us. The Bible tells us exalt, admire, and worship only God.

To honor is not the same as idolizing someone. We honor those people who do outstanding things or make contributions to others. At school we honor those who work hard and make the best grades. This is what the Bible means when it says that we should give honor where honor is due. But as those who follow God's Word we should not uplift or idolize any one. Instead we should realize that they are just people, just like us.

New Testament Stories

Week 44 REVIEW

This week is a review of the previous six weeks. Try to have the children involved in the review as much as possible, especially concerning the practical application.

As a possible idea, divide them into three teams and have each team review two weeks for 15-20 minutes. Then present it to the others at the end of the time. They could recite the verse, sing a song, and then tell a portion of the story.

Another good way to review would be to invite the parents of four children and ask the whole family to review one week of the lesson. You would need to contact the parents early in the week so they could prepare. This would be a very good way to encourage households to get into the story together at home during the week.

Keep the emphasized and embedded points in mind as you plan.

New Testament Stories

Week 45

Point to emphasize: Never let the crowd control your actions

Reference: Acts 14: 19-28

Memory verse: Proverbs 14:31b

. . . But he who is gracious to the needy honors Him (God).

Story sample:

What happened to Paul and Barnabas next will shock you. After the crowd saw the lame man walk when Paul spoke to him they wanted to worship Paul. But some who were against the gospel came and turned the crowd against Paul. WOW!! I can hardly believe it. This crowd had been lifting up Paul but now these Jews had come and turned them against Paul - even to the point that the crowd was throwing stones at Paul to kill him.

Now I know you are going to ask, "Can people really change so fast?" Well, when you are young you may not see such a thing but it is really true. A crowd that is excited is not stable. The crowd becomes so very emotional. Excited crowds tend to lose their reasoning. There may be a huge crowd and everyone is cheering. Then it turns to booing. If you ask many of the people in the crowd, they really may not know why they are cheering or booing. They are just doing what the crowd is doing. I read an article in the newspaper once about a crowd at a soccer game in another country. It was a very exciting game. First there was cheering, then there was booing, and then the booing turned to fighting! In the middle of all this action, the bleachers collapsed from all the movement. Many people were hurt that day, and mostly just because they all went along with the crowd.

I think you have seen this kind of thing in a small way. You are with a group of your good friends and a few of them start saying bad things about the new child in the class. Soon the whole group is going along with it even though it is not right. The new child is not really bad but some of your friends find it easy to say things against others. Their negative speaking spreads to others, and soon the whole group is speaking bad things about the new child in the class. But the truth is that the new child has not done anything to cause all these things to be said. It is because someone in the group who likes to speak negative things about others. (***story teller-please insert your own story about how negative speaking spreads.*)

What can we do so that we don't become part of a crowd like this?

The story about Paul and Barnabas does not end here. With the help of the Lord and those who believed into the Lord in that city, they were able to continue on in their journey.

New Testament Stories

Week 46

Point to emphasize: Learning to be responsible

Reference: Acts 15:22-34

Memory verse: Psalm 31:23a

Love Jehovah, all you who are His faithful ones; Jehovah guards the trustworthy,...

Story sample:

After a time Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to be in some fellowship among the brothers there. You see, a big problem had come up and there needed to be a solution. So a number of brothers were going to get together.

Once they had the solution these brothers decided that a letter should be written and carried to all the churches. And who do you think they asked to carry that IMPORTANT letter? Paul, that is right. And they also asked three others to go along. It was such an important letter that they sent four.

Now, it is not a small thing to be chosen for such an important task. At school the teacher can choose just about anyone in the class to do little things like sharpen all the pencils or take all the recess balls out to the playground; but can your teacher choose just anyone for an **important** task? No, only someone who is responsible can be given an important task. Let's list some tasks, both easy and important:

1. sharpening pencils
2. making your bed
3. walking with your young sister or brother to school
4. picking up your mess
5. helping someone with their homework
6. clearing the dishes off the table
7. taking lunch money for the week to school in your pocket

*(****let the kids add to the list. Storyteller, you may have other tasks that are more applicable to the kids. Please use them. This list is just a help. Make some of the tasks easy and some important.)*

To the left of each task let's put an "E" for easy and an "I" for important. *(do this together with the kids)*

Who can do the easy kinds of tasks? Well, to sharpen a pencil you just have to be able to hold the pencil and use the sharpener. Almost anyone in school can do that. Even a child who talks in class when they should be quiet can do it.

Now, what about this one? *(point to #3)* If your younger sister is in kindergarten and you are in fourth grade, you should be responsible enough to walk a few blocks with her to school. BUT let's say that the fourth grader is one who is always clowning around. In

New Testament Stories

class and at home he always acts like things are a joke. Are his folks going to let him walk his younger sister to school?? Why not? *(let some kids answer)* So, how we behave shows what kind of tasks we can be asked to do.

*(**storyteller - insert your own story about the qualities of a child who was chosen to carry out an important task.)*

So we all should be doing tasks everyday - even without being told. If we start with easy tasks, then after some time we will be given more important tasks. This way we are learning to be responsible.

New Testament Stories

Week 47

Point to emphasize: Don't insist on having your own way

Reference: Acts 15:32-41

***** Do not bring in spiritual explanations concerning Barnabas leaving Paul. Simply state the facts to the children.**

Memory verse: 2 Corinthians 2:9b

. . .that I might know your approvedness, whether you are obedient in all things.

Story sample:

Paul and Barnabas had been sent out with two others to carry this important letter to the churches. After this Paul thought they should go back to visit some of the new believers. Now they were already a group of four. There was no need to add another. BUT Barnabas really wanted Mark to go along. This is the same Mark who dropped out of their journey before.

There was no need to bring Mark along and he really had not done well on their other journey. But Barnabas INSISTED!! What is it to insist? (*see what the children say*) This is to insist.

In school or even in children's meeting we are often put into groups or teams. And many times you hear the whining begin, "But I want to be in that group. Sarah (or Sam) is in that group and I want to be with her." (***Storyteller - insert your own story about wanting to be with a best friend instead of staying within the grouping given to you. It can be as simple as complaining because you are not able to be on the same kickball team as your best friend.*)

This is to insist. Some go so far as to not play the game if they can't be with their friend on a team. This is kind of what Barnabas did. He decided that he would not go along since the other three did not think Mark should come.

But who loses out by insisting? The one who insists loses out. One time a boy sat out from playing tag because he was not on his friend's team. All the other children were playing, having a good time. But he sat there missing out. It is much better to not insist and settle that it is OK that I did not get my way. It is much better to go along with the choices that have been made than to insist on something else.

New Testament Stories

Week 48 REVIEW

As much as possible, try to include the children in preparing for and presenting the review. The following are the important points of each week to emphasize with the children, and a few activity ideas:

Week 45:

Never let the crowd control your actions

Activity: Make a card for a friend. Have them write something that they like about that friend on the inside of the card. As you are working, have the children give examples of times they have/have not gone along with a crowd.

Week 46:

Learning to be responsible

Activity: Have the children make a list of tasks. Then they can make a weekly chore chart to do to follow the next week. Give each child some stickers to have their mom add if they do the chore each day.

Week 47:

Don't insist on having your own way

Activity: Break the children into groups of 3-4. Let one child choose a game to play (relay, word game, hopscotch, etc.). The others should agree with the one who chooses, whether they want to play or not. Point out how well they did (or didn't do) by allowing one person to choose.

New Testament Stories

Week 49

Point to emphasize: We should all want to be well-attested

Reference: Acts 16:1-5

Memory verse: Deuteronomy 1:13

Choose for yourselves men who are wise and prudent and well-attested,...and I will make them your leaders.

Story sample:

Paul and Silas continued traveling through Cilicia and came to the cities of Derbe and Lystra where Paul and Barnabas had visited earlier. While they were there a young brother who was well-attested to by the brothers joined them. His name was Timothy.

"Well-attested" (*write on the board*) We have heard that term before in other stories. It has the meaning "to be approved".

Timothy was a young man yet he was well-attested. How old was Timothy? Well, I do not know because the Bible does not say. But I know that he was young, which means that you do not need to be old to be well-attested. I am sure that a 12 year old could even be well-attested. I think even a 10 or 8 year old could also be well-attested.

What kinds of things show that we are well-attested while we are young? Let's make a list together of things that might make us well-attested. (*write these on the board and have kids give many examples too. Use this to as a way to point out all the positive things that can be done to be well-attested at home and at school and at children's meeting*)

Dependable - that means doing something when you said you would

Example: Feeding the dog everyday without being reminded

Trustworthy - this means being honest

Example: Your friend gives you a note to give to someone else and you do not peek inside to read it

Helpful - this means doing things that help others

Example: Your little brother made the mess and yet you help pick it up

Paul and Silas were planning to travel through the land of Galatia and preach the gospel. Timothy, a young man, was able to join them for this noble purpose because he was well-attested.

New Testament Stories

Week 50

Point to emphasize: Following directions

Reference: Acts 16: 3a, 6-11a

Memory verse: Deuteronomy 13:4

You shall follow Jehovah your God; and you shall fear Him, keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and hold fast to Him.

Story sample:

Paul, Silas, and Timothy traveled on to city after city to share the gospel with people. They went to many cities, and they skipped many cities as well. Why do you think they skipped so many cities?

The Bible says that even though they were traveling to preach the gospel, they were not allowed to stop in these cities to spread the gospel. So why were they not allowed?? This is a very good question.

Paul, Silas and Timothy were under Someone else's directions. These three were not their own bosses. They did not just do things because that is what they wanted. No, these three were under God's directions and for some reason God did not want them to stop in certain places. When they started out, Paul had thought that they would spend a lot of time visiting new cities in these areas. He expected to spread the gospel through out these areas; but as he traveled on, God did not allow him. Paul followed God's directions. He did not do things his own way. So Paul had to change his plans of visiting cities and preaching the gospel. God wanted Paul to go to a certain place, so they went.

Now, whose direction are you under? Your parents, your teachers, sometimes even your older brothers and sisters. And right now you may be thinking, "Oh, it was easy for Paul to follow God. If God talked to me I would certainly listen and obey."

But let me tell you that if you can't listen to and obey those that you can see - your parents, your teacher, your babysitter, your older brother.... - then certainly you can't obey God, Whom you cannot see.

Paul was no different than you. He was under a Boss. He was under Someone else's directions. He needed to listen and to obey.

Yet we have such a hard time obeying. Our folks might say: (***storyteller-insert your own home examples*)

- 1) "Come home right after school." But somehow after school you end up playing ball with a friend before heading home.
- 2) "Don't toss your things on the chair; put them away before getting a snack." But somehow the fridge is opened and you get out the juice and snack while your sweater and backpack remain where you tossed them.
- 3) "Finish your homework before playing on the computer." But somehow you leave your homework in your backpack and sneak off to the computer.

New Testament Stories

Most of these examples are ones that happen so often in our homes. And they show that we did something other than follow instructions. We did not do "bad" things but we just did what we wanted to do instead of following the directions that were given to us.

It is good that Paul listened and followed directions. He knew that he was under Someone else's directions and that this Someone knew what he should be doing. And Who was this Someone? Right – God! He could listen and obey. He stopped what he was doing and changed his plans according to Someone else's directions.

New Testament Stories

Week 51

Point to emphasize: Getting advice from the right ones

Reference: Acts 16: 6-15

Memory verse: Acts 22:10

And I said, "What shall I do, Lord?"

Story sample:

God had directed Paul, Silas and Timothy to go to Troas. But other than that, they just weren't sure where to go to do this. Now, what should they do next? That was the question.

I think we all have asked that question. What should we do now? We make a plan but nothing has worked out like we thought it would, so what do we do now?

When I was in high school I had a great idea for a biology project. I would reconstruct a chicken's skeleton from chicken bones. Well, I had it all worked out. I would boil a chicken, pick out all the bones, clean them up and then glue them into a skeleton. Of course boiling a chicken was easy. My mom did that at home for dinner so I knew how to do that. Then I got the cooked meat off the bones. Then I began to get the bones entirely clean. Oh, it was a mess!! Eventually, I had to admit that I could not do it. All this time had been spent and the project was almost due and I was not even close to having the bones I needed to build the skeleton. So WHAT should I do now? Well, I went and told my science teacher all about it. Then he laid out a plan for a project that would work in the time I had. I went to someone who was older and wiser and who I could trust to get an answer and I got the help.

The Bible does not tell us what Paul and the brothers did when they were in Troas but it might be they were wondering, "What should we do next?" I would not be surprised if they prayed to the Lord about it. Because when we don't know what to do next, it is best to go and talk with someone who does. That is why I went and talked to my science teacher.

While in Troas, the answer came. Paul and the brothers believed that God was sending them to Macedonia to preach the gospel there. They followed God's directions and left on a ship for Macedonia.

Who are some that you think you could trust to help you know what you should do?
(Make a list: Mother, father, grandparents, teacher, policeman, etc.)

New Testament Stories

Week 52

Point to emphasize: We can speak to our friends

Reference: Acts 16: 6-15

Memory verse: Psalm 119:46

I will also speak of Your testimonies before kings and not be ashamed.

Story sample:

When they got to Troas, Paul and the brothers knew that often in these cities people who were seeking God would find a quiet place outside the city's wall by a river where they could pray. So this is where they went. On the Sabbath day they went outside the gate of the city by the rivers. There they found some women who had come together. One of these was a businesswoman named Lydia. She was a seller of purple dyed goods in Philippi. The brothers sat down and spoke with these women. As they were sharing the gospel Lydia was listening and the Lord opened her heart to the things Paul shared. Lydia must have been full of joy at hearing the gospel because her reaction was to gather all her household and have them hear it too!

She must have realized that the Lord Jesus needed to be her Savior and also He needed to be others' Savior, too. Her heart was opened by the Lord and she must have known that others in her household could have their hearts opened too. So not only did she get saved but also all her household. She was saved and baptized that day and so was all her household.

So Lydia was the first person saved in Philippi. That is wonderful! And it is even more wonderful that she SHARED the gospel with others. Can you share with others like Lydia did? Of course, you can. I heard about a young girl that was invited to a neighborhood children's meeting. She came to these meetings for 2-3 years. That's a long time, isn't it? And do you know what finally happened? After all that time of hearing stories about God, singing songs about God, and being with other children who loved God, she opened her heart and received the Lord Jesus! She got saved because someone in the neighborhood invited her to come.

I also know of a third grade boy who shared a children's meeting song with his teacher at school. The teacher liked it so well that she wrote it on the board and the whole class sang it. She really liked that song. So we can all share the songs and stories we hear in children's meeting. It is good to share like this.

We can all invite our friends and classmates to come to children's meeting or a neighborhood children meeting. We can be like Lydia and share with others.

New Testament Stories

Week 53

Point to emphasize: Taking care of others with a happy heart

Reference: Acts 16:15

Memory verse: Romans 12:13

Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality.

Story sample:

Lydia not only shared with others concerning her salvation, but once she was baptized, she shared her home with the traveling brothers. Paul and the brothers did not have a place to stay in Philippi. They had come there to preach the gospel. Perhaps they expected to pitch a tent somewhere in the city while they were there. But Lydia was insistent that they come and stay in her home with her household while they were in Philippi. This probably means that she made sure the brothers were served meals in her home and maybe she made sure that their laundry was done. When someone stays with you a few days there is a lot you do to take care of them.

I know that some of you have the saints stay with you during conferences or the summer or winter training. Sometimes they stay for over a week. What kinds of things must your family do to have saints stay with you for a week? *(make a list-make sure there are clean sheets and towels for everyone, buy extra food, arrange bedrooms so that everyone has a place to sleep, clean up those rooms, etc)* Then what extra things does your family do to take care of these guests while they stay with you? (buy extra food, cook extra, wash more dishes, etc.) It takes a lot of extra work to have guests stay with you, doesn't it? And why do we do all this extra work?? Because we always have such a good time when the saints stay with us in our homes.

I am sure it would have been easier on Lydia if she would have let Paul and the brothers just go and set up a tent somewhere in the city. BUT she would not hear of it! No, she wanted them to be in her home and it was worth all the extra work to have them there. What a wonderful heart Lydia had.

Sometimes we don't always have such a wonderful heart though. When I was a kid, we had a neighbor girl move in with us for a whole year. I already had to share my room with one of my sisters, but when Diane moved in, that meant that my other sister had to move into our room too. Three girls in one room! Now I didn't even have my own bed to sleep in – I had to share it with my little sister. I have to admit I didn't have a very good attitude about it. And to this very day I regret that I had such a bad attitude.

On the other hand, my dad would often whistle as he worked around the house. There were small fix-it jobs he needed to do. Having a family of four kids caused him some extra work. But I remember him often whistling as he did it. What does the whistle tell you? (that he was happy or okay about doing the work) Yes, he had a wonderful heart, just like Lydia. *(***storyteller-insert your story own about how you had such a pleasant attitude as a kid when helping out.)*

New Testament Stories

I guess the difference in our heart comes from how we look at things. If we only think about how much work and extra things we have to do to take care of others then there will only be frowns and grumblings. But if we consider that it is our opportunity to take care of someone else then we will have the cheery attitude and maybe even a whistle. This must be why the Bible tells us to "Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality". (Romans 12:13)

New Testament Stories

Week 54 REVIEW

This week is a review of the previous five weeks. Try to have the children involved in the review as much as possible. As an idea, make some games to help them remember the stories. (eg. Word search, crossword puzzle, etc. - You can find help to do this online). Do it as a rotation, a different game for each story. The serving ones can sit at a table with the children and talk about the stories as they work. Keep the emphasized and embedded points in mind as you plan. Remember to work out your time so that each rotation is the same. You will only have about 5 minutes per story.

New Testament Stories

Week 55

Point to emphasize: We should not accuse others without proof.

Reference: Acts 16:19-40

Memory verse: Luke 3:14b

. . . Extort nothing from anyone by force, nor take anything by false accusation, and be content with your wages.

Story sample:

While Paul and Silas were in Philippi, there were some men who got angry with them because their speaking caused these men to lose the hope of making a profit. And they hated to lose money. So these men were really angry with Paul and Silas. They wanted revenge! You know what revenge is, don't you? It is a way to get back at someone.

So they grabbed Paul and Silas and they dragged them to the marketplace to the rulers. That means that someone grabbed them so hard that they were forced to be taken somewhere others wanted to take them. They hadn't done anything wrong! Yet here they were being dragged about for no good reason.

And to make matters worse, when they got to the magistrates (the Roman rulers), they even lied about what Paul and Silas had been doing. They told the magistrates, "These men, being Jews, are throwing our city into confusion." They accused them of teaching customs that were against what the Romans practiced. They pointed out that they were different. They were Jews. Now, the Romans were proud of being Romans and didn't like anything or anyone different. But it wasn't a matter of being a Jew or being a Roman, and it wasn't even a matter of causing confusion in the city. Paul and Silas had just come to speak the word of God. They weren't doing anything wrong. They were being falsely accused. These men were accusing Paul and Silas of something very serious.

Children often accuse others without proof. For example, you walk into your bedroom and your things are messed up, so you accuse your younger brother. A pencil sharpener is missing from your backpack, so you accuse your younger sister. Later you find it where you left it. Sometimes we are also accused of something we did not do.

It happened to me many times when I was younger. With four children in the house, there was often trouble like that. My older sister would accuse me of something, maybe of taking her favorite toy (even though I really hadn't taken it, she had just left it at a friend's house), and the next thing you know, she would have my younger sister agreeing with her, so she would be against me too. And then they would go to my oldest sister and she would agree with them too, even though I told all of them I hadn't taken the toy. All of this accusing made me feel awful!

I can imagine how Paul and Silas must have felt, being accused in such a way!

New Testament Stories

Week 56

Point to emphasize: We can talk to God and sing, even when things are bad.

Reference: Acts 16:19-40

Memory verse: Romans 12:12

Rejoice in hope; endure in tribulation; persevere in prayer.

Story sample:

The accusations made against Paul and Silas got the whole city stirred up, and they all rose up together against them. The magistrates tore off their garments and ordered some to beat them with rods. After that they had Paul and Silas thrown into prison.

To make matters worse, when they got to prison, the magistrates told the jailer to make sure Paul and Silas were secure, so they couldn't escape. The jailer took them to the inner prison and locked them in stocks (wooden instrument as cruel punishment to hold the prisoner's wrists, ankles, and neck). It was awful! Paul and Silas had been falsely accused and then severely beaten without any proof that they had committed a crime. Now they were in a dark prison bound in stocks. It was a miserable place to be.

What would you have done in such a miserable situation? When I was young, when I was accused of doing things, I would cry to Mom, and look for some way to get back at them. I always thought of doing something negative, and never thought of doing anything positive.

Do you think this is what Paul and Silas did? No way! Do you know what the Bible says they did in prison? It says that they prayed. Isn't that positive? And it says that they sang hymns of praise to God. Isn't that positive? Wow! They had every right to be furious and make a huge scene and cause trouble, but they just prayed and sang. These two men were really men of God weren't they? No matter how bad things got or how unfair things were, they always continued to pray and sing.

What kind of prayers do you think they prayed? The Bible doesn't say what they prayed, but at least we know they talked to God while they were in prison. And we can talk to God when we have a problem too!

And what kind of songs do you think they sang? What song do you think you would sing? I think I would sing "Our God is so big, so strong and so mighty, there's nothing our God cannot do – that's right!" (*sing song*) It would make me feel better, knowing that God can do anything – even get them out of prison! Well, the Bible says that they sang hymns of praise. Some of the prisoners must have heard them singing, so this was a wonderful way to show the other prisoners that they loved God. And we can sing songs to show our friends that we love God too! Let's try talking and singing to God this week, OK?

New Testament Stories

Week 57

Point to emphasize: We should try to do the best we can.

Reference: Acts 16:19-40

Memory verse: Proverbs 20:11

Even a child makes himself known by his deeds, whether his work is pure and whether it is upright.

Story sample:

Last week we talked about Paul and Silas being thrown into prison. And what did they do while they were in prison? (Let the children offer their answers.) So we know that they were thanking God and singing to God while they were in prison.

This week we want to talk about someone else who was there. Let's talk about the jailer. Now a jailer is the person who guards all the prisoners. This job carries a lot of responsibility. Who wants to spell responsibility? (choose a child) That's right! (you may want to sing the song here). So the jailer had an important job and he took it very seriously. He tried to do whatever his bosses, the magistrates, told him to do.

In order to keep Paul and Silas secure, so that they wouldn't escape, the jailer put them in the inner prison, the most secure part of the prison. Then, just to be sure, he put their feet in stocks, (cruel punishment that immobilizes the victim by locking their arms, legs or head into a fixed position) so that they wouldn't be able to run away. He was very responsible about his job.

But that night at about midnight, after the jailer had gone to sleep, something very strange happened. While Paul and Silas were busy singing and praising God, there was a great earthquake! I know that some of you have probably felt an earthquake before, but this was even more than that – it was a GREAT earthquake. So everything was shaking terribly. And with all the shaking, the foundations of the prison house were shaken, and the doors of the prison opened and everyone's bonds were unfastened. Wow! All those prisoners could have just run away.

Can you imagine what the jailer thought when all the commotion woke him up and he saw the prison doors open? Remember, he was responsible for all those prisoners. And now he thought they were all gone. He felt horrible! He felt as if he had failed at his job. If you are a responsible person, you will always feel bad if you don't do the best job.

This happened to my sister once when we were young. . Mom and Dad had to take Grandma to the airport so they left my older sister in charge of us. She was told she had to be responsible for us. While they were gone, we all went out to a field close to our house to play. We loved this field because it had great trees to climb. So the first thing I did was to climb one of those trees. When my sister called us to go back home, I got careless and started to slide down the trunk of the tree. There was a nail in the tree and my knee got hooked on it and I got a huge cut in my knee. My sister felt terrible! She

New Testament Stories

got my cut all cleaned up and bandaged but she was sure she would be in BIG trouble when Mom and Dad got home. When they got home, she went and hid in her room because she didn't want to face them about not being responsible.

In the end, my parents forgave her for what she had done, because they knew that she did the best she could.

And the jailor was forgiven too! Paul and the other prisoners all remained in the prison so he would not be in trouble. They also spoke the word of the good news of Jesus Christ to him and he and his whole household believed!

New Testament Stories

Week 58

Point to emphasize: We can practice until it becomes a habit.

Reference: Acts 17:1-5

Memory verse: Psalm 145: 21a

My mouth will speak the praise of Jehovah, . . .

Story sample:

Paul and his companions continued to travel after they left Philippi. They wanted everyone to hear the good news concerning Jesus Christ. They went all the way to Thessalonica. (*use map*) Thessalonica was a leading city. In Thessalonica there was a synagogue of the Jews, a place where the Jews came to seek knowledge of God by studying the Holy Scriptures. Now Paul had a custom of going to the synagogue in each place to speak about the Lord Jesus to the Jews who were gathered there. Do you know what a custom is? It's something that you do over and over again, kind of a way of life, a habit.

Do you have habits? I have a lot of habits. One of my habits is to rise early. Every day I get up early, at 5:00 am. It's just my habit. Do you know why I get up at 5:00? I do it so that I can read my Bible before anyone else gets up. I've been doing it for a long time, so it's become my custom, my habit. And it's a good habit to have.

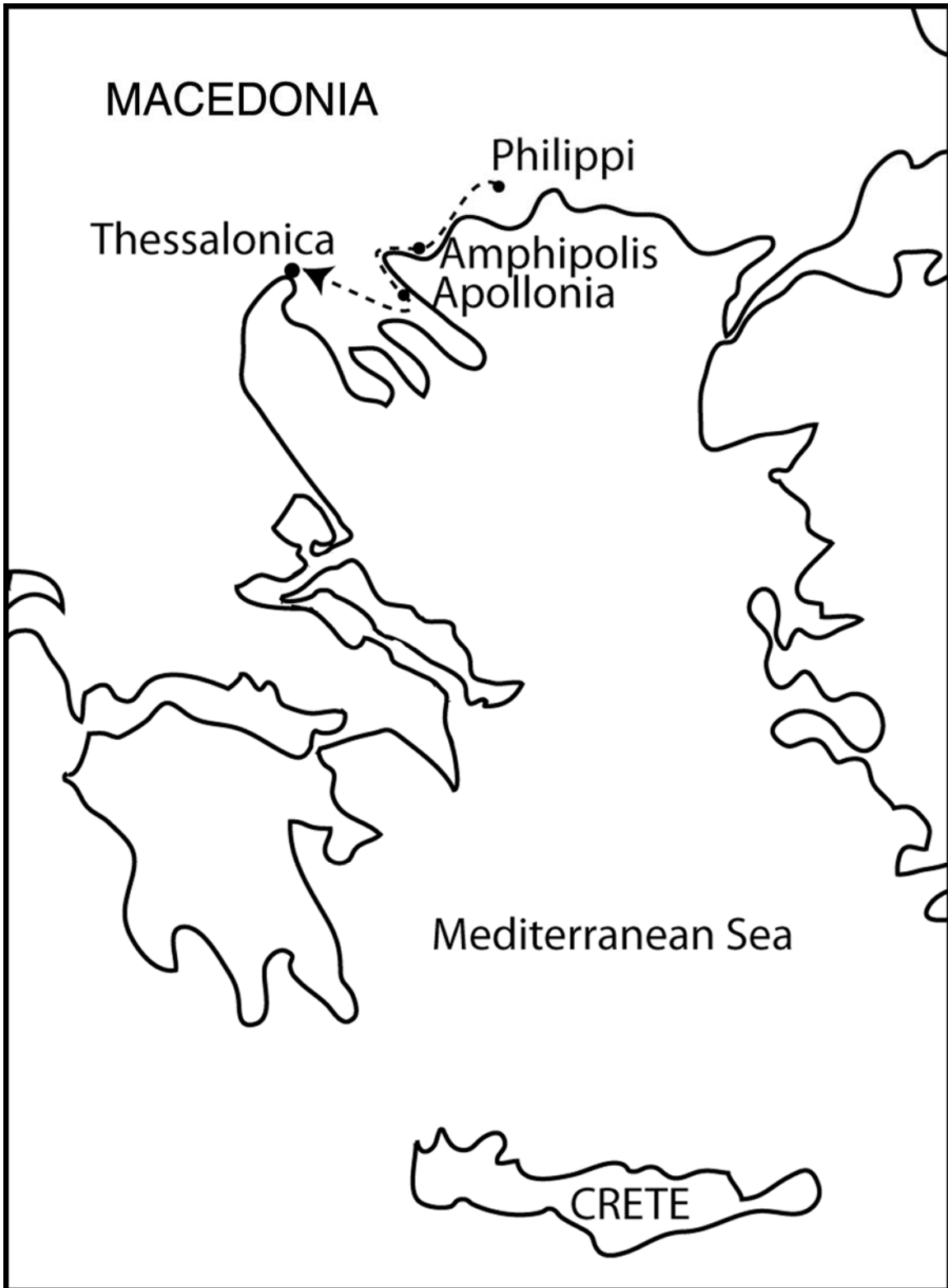
What are some good habits we have already? (*Making our bed, brushing our teeth, washing hands after using the bathroom, etc*)

Sometimes we develop habits because our mom reminds us day after day...."make sure you make your bed". But sometimes we decide on our own to form good habits. We make a chart and put it on our bedroom door. Then before we leave our room we can put a check by "Made bed". Then it is not mom's reminders that form our habit but our keeping track of it each day. What good thing might you decide to make a habit?

I think this is how Paul formed the habit of speaking the good news concerning Jesus Christ in each city. No one was there reminding him to do it. Rather, he must have known that it would be a good practice. So in each and every city he practiced and soon it was his habit.

That, of course, is a very good habit.

New Testament Stories



New Testament Stories

Week 59

Point to emphasize: Don't be a loafer

Reference: Acts 17:5-14

Memory verse: Ephesians 4:26

Be angry, yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your indignation,

Story sample:

Sometimes the Bible uses very interesting words. And to tell us about what happened while Paul was in Thessalonica it uses the word loafers. (*Read Acts 17:5: But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some evil men from among the loafers in the marketplace, gathered a crowd and set the city in an uproar*) Loafers are people who don't do anything productive with their time. They sit around doing nothing for a long time. Today when I hear someone say, "I went to hangout with my friends", I wonder if that is the same as saying that you are a loafer.

Well, these loafers in Thessalonica did not use their time to work, study or help others out. They sat around doing nothing for hours. So they were very lazy, spending so much time doing nothing. These loafers caused a lot of problems for Paul. By this you can see that it is not good to be a loafer.

It is good to use our time to do meaningful things. Some great things to do with our time is to read books, do our homework, help others with projects they need to do, spend time working on puzzles, etc. And the more we do things with our time the happier we are. When my niece was younger she was involved in lots of activities. And she never said that she was bored. Why, because she used her time to do lots of things.

What are some things we could do to fill our time so that we don't become lazy loafers?

1. Determine to learn one new word every day
 2. Read a book for 20 minutes each day
 3. Find a puzzle book and do a new one each day
 4. Pack my own lunch each day
- Etc....

This will help use our time in meaningful ways. None of us wants to end up a loafer.

New Testament Stories

Week 60

Point to emphasize: Learn to do things immediately.

Reference: Acts 17: 14-15

Memory verse: Proverbs 27:18b

. . . And he who takes care of his master will be honored.

Story Sample:

Some of the Jews and loafers in Thessalonica caused a **BIG** problem for Paul and his companions while traveling. They had to quickly leave that city and go to another one. But the troublemakers followed Paul. They were out to get him. Once Paul's companions knew that these troublemakers were coming they **immediately** sent Paul away to another city.

To do something immediately sounds easy, but how often do we do something immediately? Some times when my mom would tell me that it was time to wash up and set the table, I would finish reading the page before I responded. I am sure you are the same. We do not do things immediately. We often take our time to respond. To **immediately** do something means we must STOP what we are doing and forget any things we had planned on doing! And, honestly, that is not so easy to do.

One time I got a call – a family was moving to New Zealand. And they needed help packing up their stuff. Their car and all their belongings would have to go on a ship all the way from California to New Zealand. And the problem was - the truck was coming the next day! How would she get a whole house full of things packed by the next day?

When some of us found out about this, we started making some calls. Those that got the phone call did something **immediately**. They all stopped what they were doing and put aside everything they had planned to do. They **immediately** went to help. They got everything all packed and ready to go in time for the truck. Everyone was so happy! By working together **immediately** they were able to send the household items off.

What things could we do immediately this week? (*discuss things where they usually take your own time*)

New Testament Stories

Week 61

Point to emphasize: Keeping busy is better than being impatient

Reference: Acts 17:16-34

Memory verse: Colossians 4:6

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

Story sample:

Because Paul needed to escape from the troubling ones that were following him, he ended up in a city by himself. He needed to wait there until his companions caught up with him.

So there he was in Athens...waiting.

None of us have been in a city by ourselves waiting BUT I am sure we all have had to wait on others many times. Sometimes you are ready to go to the park but your older brother is not ready and you have to wait for him. Or your folks said that they were taking you to the store to buy some shoes and you are ready but dad got a phone call and now you must wait. Were there times this week when you had to wait? While you waited did you get impatient? What did you do? (*talk with the children about this*)

I know a child who once had to wait a lot. At first she would get very impatient, complaining about it. They one day as she waited, she saw something interesting. She was noticing something and wanted to see if she could draw it. Out came the paper and pencil from her backpack. And before she knew it her waiting was over. Her folks were there to pick her up. What stopped her from being impatient about waiting? Right! She found something to do.

What things might we do while we are waiting? (count backwards from 100, count backwards by 2 from 100, look at an object we see and think of all the other words that start with the same letter) There are countless things we can do so that we are not impatiently waiting.

Do you think Paul waited impatiently? (NO) He used the time to explore the city of Athens. It is most interesting that the Bible tells us that Paul "carefully observed" the things he saw in Athens. What he observed in Athens gave him more things to speak to others concerning the Lord Jesus. Our learning can be of great value in many ways.

New Testament Stories

Week 62 REVIEW

This week is a review of the previous seven weeks. Try to have the children involved in the review as much as possible. As an idea, make some games to help them remember the stories. (e.g., word search, crossword puzzle, etc. - You can find help to do this online). Do it as a rotation, a different game for each story. The serving ones can sit at a table with the children and talk about the stories as they work. Keep the emphasized and embedded points in mind as you plan.

New Testament Stories

Week 63

Point to emphasize: We can work to help ourselves and others

Reference: Acts 18:1-4

Memory verse: Ephesians 4:28b

...working with his own hands in that which is respectable, that he may have something to share with him who has need.

Story sample:

Paul moved from Athens to Corinth. In Corinth he found a Jewish man and his wife, Aquila and Priscilla, who were tentmakers. Since Paul worked at the same trade as them, he remained with them. Paul had learned how to make tents, which many people used to live in when they went from place to place. Paul remained with Aquila and Priscilla because they could work together making tents. It was a good thing that Paul knew how to work with his hands in a trade because now, at Corinth, he needed to work to support himself and was also able to help others.

I know a number of parents who are like Paul in this way. They work at a trade to support themselves and their families and they also share with others in need. Isn't this interesting?! Paul had a top education and he was also a skilled craftsman. This surely made him more useful to the Lord.

Many times I have had someone help me by sharing their trade. One time when I was in college my car broke down. I really needed some work done on it. Of course I was going to college, living away from home and working part time to support myself so I did not have all the money I needed to fix my car. I thought I was going to need to borrow some money to get my car fixed. But that is not what happened. Instead of taking it to a shop and getting it fixed, a family I knew heard about my broken car. The dad in this family was a car mechanic in his spare time. He had an office job Monday to Friday, but in his spare time he worked on cars with his high school sons. So he offered to work on my car with his sons. They not only knew how to fix cars; they also were willing to help someone (like me) who needed their car fixed. They shared! *(storyteller-please relate your own story of someone knowing a trade).*

Let's see if we know anyone in these trades? *(show some pictures of these different trades and have the children raise their hands if they know anyone who does these things)*

Plumbers
Flooring
Gardener
Baker

Carpenters
Auto mechanics
Painter
Tailor

Electricians
Printers
Chef

Handyman
Welders
Shoemaker

New Testament Stories

I know a lot of people who work at trades. It is really good to be able to work with your hands to do these kinds of useful jobs. I have known plumbers, welders, all kinds of ones who know a trade, yet who give their time to building projects in the churches.

****This is a good opportunity to have a guest speaker*

- 1) The guest speaker should come to share with the children the trade they do using pictures and maybe bringing some of their tools and equipment to show the children.*
- 2) The guest speaker should then tell the children how they gave their time to go and serve to build a meeting hall or work on some project for the saints in the church life. It is always good to show pictures of these buildings and projects since many of the children have not seen or heard about such things.*

Paul worked at his trade, making tents with Aquila and Priscilla. He was there supporting himself and also helping others.

New Testament Stories

Week 64

Point to emphasize: We should honor God and man

Reference: Acts 18: 1-5

Memory verse: 1 Samuel 2:30b

...for those who honor Me I will honor...

Story sample:

So last week we heard about Paul's trade. What is a trade? Right, it's some work you do to earn a living. And what did Paul do? Right, Paul was there in Corinth making tents. And do you remember whom he was working with? Yes, Aquila and Priscilla. So they were all there working on making tents to earn a living. But is that all Paul was doing?

So in Acts chapter 18 we can see that even though Paul was working to be able to live, actually his main desire was to go and speak to those who gathered in the synagogue to hear about God. Paul loved God and His Word, and he loved to speak to people the good things about God and the Lord Jesus Christ. And actually, this was the reason for all his journeys from so far away which had brought him all the way to Corinth.

Now what if Paul really only wanted to support himself and didn't care about God or honor God? He could have worked seven days a week, and even earned so much more money and had all kinds of comfortable things. I know some people do this. They are spending all of their lives, time and energy on making money. And unfortunately they neglect God and do not honor Him properly. Do you see this example from Paul? Yes, he did work to make tents at certain times of the week, but he did this just so he could support himself and some others. But is this all he did? Actually, if you read the story from Acts, it's clear that Paul's heart was for bringing good news to others to know this marvelous Lord Jesus.

So it's clear that Paul was honoring God. But is this all he was honoring? Actually he was honoring all the people he spoke to about the Lord. Let me illustrate: If you have someone special come over for dinner, what might your family cook to honor them? Would you serve some cold spaghetti? What if it was old leftovers? No, you would like to honor your guests. You would serve them the best food.

And that is what Paul was doing. He was honoring others by sharing about the Lord Jesus, by serving them the very BEST! Did you know that today we can also do this? Every week we honor the Lord by coming together for children's meeting. We use this day to gather together with others to sing songs to the Lord, to learn to love the Lord, and to hear about His Word together. Sometimes we even get to visit each other in our homes and share a meal. We even say that this is the "Lord's Day". The Lord gave us such a day to honor God and man. Just like Paul did in the book of Acts.

And here we can honor God, and we can honor each other. We can care for each other, and tell each other about how wonderful the Lord is. Have you ever honored one of your friends by inviting them to come with you to a home meeting or a children's meeting? That would also be to honor them. And if you sing a song from children's meeting to one of your friends at school or in your neighborhood, this is also to honor them by giving them the very BEST!

New Testament Stories

Week 65

Point to emphasize: God cares for our whole household

References: Acts 18:5-8; 16:31-34

Memory verse: Acts 16:34

And he brought them up into his house and set a table before them; and he exulted because he had believed in God with all his household.

Story sample:

As we saw from last week, Paul had been going out regularly to speak to people about the Lord Jesus. And we call this good news about God the "gospel", right? Yes, the word gospel simply means "good news." And what happens when you know something good? You want to tell everybody about it, right? So this is what Paul was doing there in the city of Corinth.

Now, it was very interesting that even though Paul was speaking such wonderful things about God, some of those gathered in the synagogue each week refused to hear the truth about Jesus. Wow, what an experience for Paul! How would you feel if you had something good to tell about God and it was not received? What would you do? What should Paul do?

Well in Acts chapter 18 it says he left the synagogue and went somewhere else. Where did he go? Well it just so happened that there was a house right next door. And in this house was a man named Crispus who was actually an important ruler in that place. And he had an entire household. And it says Crispus and all his household opened and received the good news Paul was speaking. This was wonderful!

Now maybe you already know this, but I want to just check this one important question from this story. What is a "household?" And even more, why was it so important that Paul would leave the synagogue and go inside a home to visit such a household? *[Discuss openly the meaning and importance of home and household]*

Most of us today may have a small household - just our folks and a few kids. But I know a household where the parents and four kids along with grandma and grandpa and one aunt live in the same house. All these are one household - they all live together in one house. Sometimes a household can include family members who may live elsewhere but since they were born into that family they still can be considered part of that household. And sometimes a household can include guests and friends who visit that home regularly.

Now we don't know for sure how large Crispus' household was, but it does say that many Corinthian people were now able to hear the good news Paul was speaking. When Crispus heard the gospel, so did everyone who lived together with him, and even his whole household. Isn't it awesome how God places us in households and cares about us there? Actually we can see so many cases in the Bible where God's care for His people happens where? At school? At work? When we are alone? No, mostly He cares for us in our household. And actually it is our household that is His biggest care for us. Many places in both the Old and New Testament show us how God cares for and visits His people together in their household. So today after the meeting, I'd like each one of you to ask your parents how God has cared for your household. *[You could finish with an open discussion about being thankful for our household and how God has cared for them there.]*

New Testament Stories

Week 66

Point to emphasize: We should learn God's word

References: Acts 18:9-11

Memory verse: Luke 11:28b

... Blessed ... are those who hear the word of God and keep it.

Story sample:

From the first time that Paul sailed to Cyprus with Barnabas, he had been traveling. (*review on a map all the places he traveled*) He went from Antioch to Cyprus, to Perga, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, and back to Antioch. Then he headed down to Jerusalem, back to Antioch, and then on to Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and then all the way through Asia Minor until he arrived at Troas. From Troas he went to Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and now he was in Corinth. WOW!! What a traveler Paul was!

And that is the very reason why the next part of his story is sooooo interesting. Instead of traveling any further, Paul was led by God to stay in Corinth for a year and a half. For a man who was usually on the road traveling to another city, a year and a half is a long time to stay in one place.

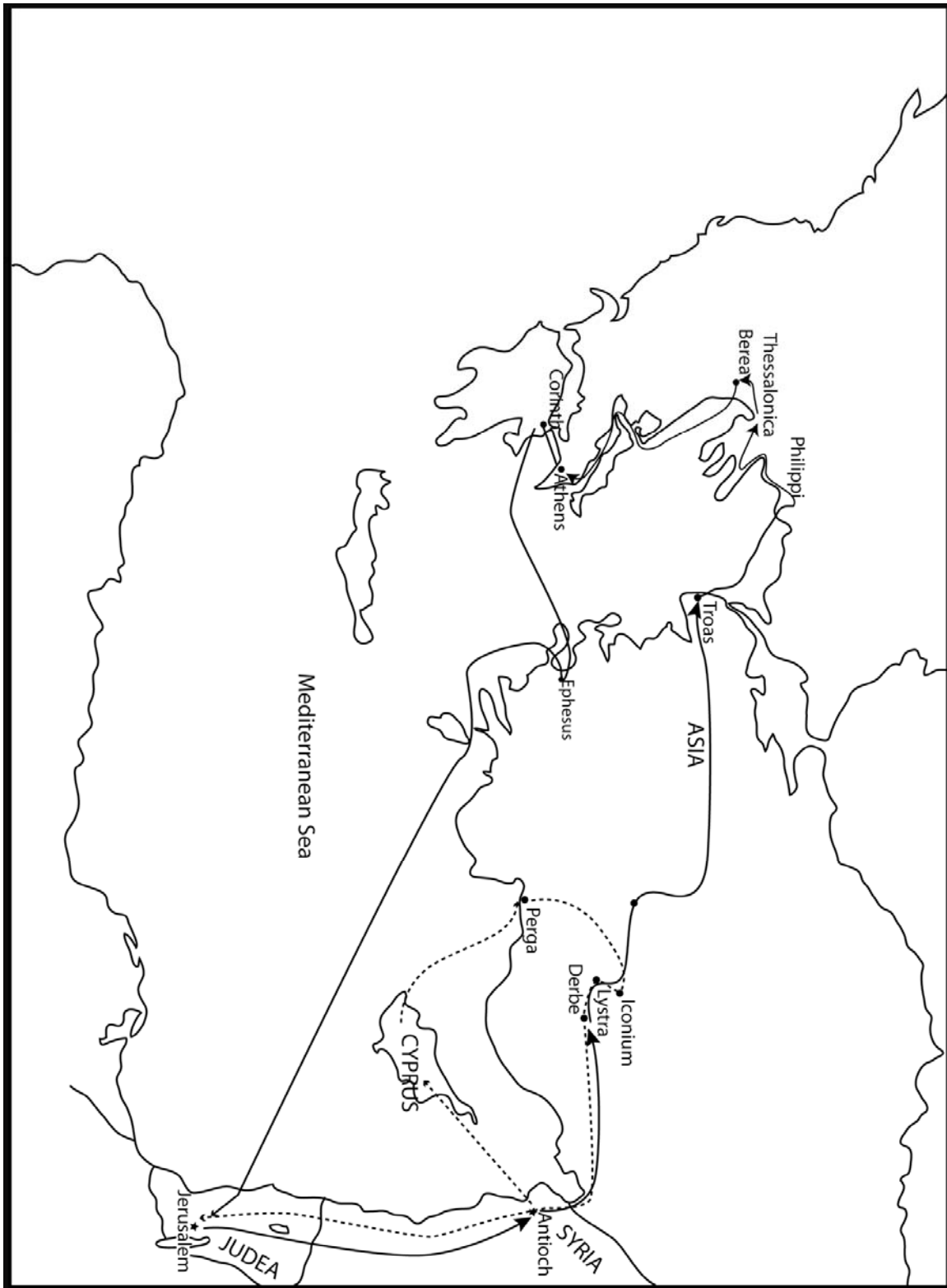
Paul stayed in Corinth teaching the Word of God. The Bible says that MANY of the Corinthians heard and received the words Paul was speaking. God had MANY people in this city. And since so many new ones responded, it was important for Paul to remain there and teach them for a long period of time.

Did you know that after we finish elementary school and enter junior high, there will be more meetings for you besides children's meeting? Yes, we go to something called the summer school of truth. We also get to go to special junior high conferences. Why? - Because just like those under Paul's care in Corinth, we also need to be taught God's Word throughout our lives. It is the same in high school and in college. In fact, during college there is an opportunity to go to a week long college training with others from the whole USA. Can you imagine having children's meeting like that? And that's not all, after college we can go to something called the full-time training to be taught God's Word. This is two years that can be set apart for each one of you to spend your full time getting into God's Word! That is great!

So if you were in Paul's time, you would have wanted to be in Corinth to be taught God's word. But today there are so many training centers where college graduates can go to get into God's Word. (*use globe*) There is a training center in Anaheim, Boston, Moscow, London, Mexico City, Paraguay, Hong Kong, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Africa, Malaysia, Korea, India, Taipei, Japan, Thailand, and New Zealand. Wow, so many places where people from different parts of the earth can go to be taught the Word of God.

Now, Paul was there in Corinth together with the brothers teaching God's Word. MANY in Corinth were eager to learn God's Word and that made it possible for Paul to teach them for a year and a half. Paul was faithful to listen and obey the Lord and many in Corinth also were eager to listen to the God's Word, hence the Lord was able to supply them with the nourishment and direction they needed for their lives. This is also what we do in children's meetings week after week when we consider God's Word. Aren't you thankful that we have the opportunity to receive God's Word in so many ways throughout our lives?

New Testament Stories



New Testament Stories

Week 67

Point to emphasize: We can learn from others

References: Acts 18:23-26

Memory verse: Proverbs 19:20a

Listen to counsel, and receive instruction, that you may be wise...

Story sample:

Priscilla and Aquila had stayed in Ephesus and did not go to Antioch with Paul. While in Ephesus, Priscilla and Aquila heard about a brother named Apollos who was teaching the things concerning Jesus. Apollos was a very good speaker. He was powerful in the Scriptures. But there was a problem. Yes, he knew the Word of God, but not completely. They heard him as he spoke boldly to the Jews at the synagogue. But as he spoke they realized that he was missing some important things. Because of this, Aquila and Priscilla spent some time with him and pointed out the way of God to him more accurately. They really helped him.

You may be good at something but someone can give you the help to be better? Do you take the help?

When I was a kid I was a very good swimmer. I even took a class to be a lifeguard. But later someone mentioned to me that there was a different way of breathing that might help me at swimming. Would I take their suggestion? Or was I so proud of my swimming ability to think that I did not need anyone's help? When we are really good at something we often do not want other's suggestions or help. Well, I took their suggestion and it made me a smoother swimmer. *(story teller - share your own story about accepting a suggestion in something you are good at)*

But it is easy to be proud when we are good at something and do not take other's suggestions. *(story teller-insert your own story about being too proud to take someone's suggestion)*

Now, how did those tent makers, Priscilla and Aquila ever learn so much about the Lord Jesus that they could help Apollos? *(ask a child)* That is right! They were with Paul making tents. And since we know that Paul was one who spoke a lot to others about Jesus we are sure that he spoke to these two tent makers. They were able to learn the word of God from someone who knew more than they did. And they stayed 18 months in Corinth with Paul as he taught the word.

Lead the children into a discussion about taking the advice of others who are more experienced.

New Testament Stories

Week 68

Point to emphasize: We should study well

References: Acts 18:23-26

Memory verse: Psalm 119:73b

...Give me understanding that I may learn Your commandments.

Story sample:

Review last week's story.

Priscilla and Aquila were able to learn the word of God from someone who knew more than they did. I'm sure they were excellent students; taking the word Paul spoke very seriously, remembering everything he said.

If you are in a class and a teacher is explaining fractions (*alphabet for younger ones*) you have to pay attention and jot it down. Otherwise when you get home and do the homework you will have a hard time remembering all that your teacher explained. Well, Paul was teaching the word of God and Priscilla and Aquila surely were paying attention and doing whatever they needed to do so that they learned it.

I know of one girl who wrote notes every time she went to the children's meeting when she was in 6th grade. She did that because she was hearing so many new things about God's salvation and she wanted to remember them and know them. So she wrote things down. That way when she got home she would not just rely on her memory. She would go back over her notes.

This is the same way we study and learn new things in school. If the teacher puts something new on the board (*alphabet, fractions*) and we just look at it, we really don't learn it. Sometimes by the time we get home we have forgotten all about it. Anytime you study, it means you read it over and over again or you write it over and over again.

And Priscilla and Aquila probably did something like that to study what Paul was teaching. That is why when Apollos spoke they could tell that what he knew was not so complete - not so accurate. They could tell that he was a little lacking in what he knew concerning the way of God. He needed them to explain the way of God to him more accurately. It is so good that Priscilla and Aquila had studied and learned from Paul's teaching of the word. They were able to pass this on to Apollos so that he could learn as well.

Serving one – give an example from your childhood about how studying helped you – or how **not studying caused you problems. Then allow some of the children to tell their own experiences.*

New Testament Stories

Week 69

Point to emphasize: We should never give up speaking to others

References: Acts 19:1-20

Memory verse: 2 Chronicles 15:7

But you be strong and do not let your hands fail, for there is reward for your labor.

Story sample:

Review last week's story

So, what was Paul doing while all of this was going on? He journeyed from place to place, always speaking the gospel of Jesus. He reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue, and he spoke the good news to the Gentiles as well. In the beginning, he moved quite often. But in our more recent stories about Paul, we heard that he stayed in Corinth for a year and a half. And now, in Ephesus, he stayed for three years! This was the longest time he spent in any city on his journeys.

There were some things he did while he was in Ephesus. Let's list them:

1. Corrected
2. Spoke
3. Taught

So what did he do to **correct**? (*Point to #1*) The people in Ephesus didn't get the same help as Apollos did from Priscilla and Aquila. So Paul stayed to help them to know the Word more accurately and correct the wrong thoughts they had about God's word.

When I was young, I thought that the "church" was just a building to go to on Sundays. But, thanks to a friend that knew the Bible really well, I was corrected to realize that the church is related to the people who are gathering together. (*Use your own example of how you were corrected*)

Next, what did Paul **speak**, and where? (*Point to #2*) He spoke about the kingdom of God, and he spoke in the synagogue. He spoke there because it was a gathering place of the people. It was a perfect opportunity to speak to many people. He spoke boldly for three months. But after this time some of the people just wouldn't accept what he had to say.

This has happened to me before. I would try to tell my friends something but they just wouldn't believe me. Then they would start mocking me. Eventually, the best thing to do was to just move on, rather than stay and argue with them. I would go on to someone who was willing to listen. And that's what Paul did; he moved on.

So now it says that he **taught**. (*Point to #3*) He did this for three years! What a long time! But he was very diligent to keep speaking. He never gave up.

New Testament Stories

Do you ever invite your friends to children's meeting or a meeting in your neighborhood? And do they sometimes say "No"? Not only once, but again and again and again? Well, we should never give up. Just keep asking. Maybe one day they will say "Yes". Wouldn't that make you happy?

We all like to see results like that when we do something. And with all of Paul's diligence, there was a result too. These three things all added up to something. (*Draw a line under "Taught"*). The word of God grew. (*Write this under the line*) The Bible even says it grew mightily!

New Testament Stories

Week 70 REVIEW

This week will be a review of 7 weeks. It covers Paul's travels, as well as his long stays in Corinth and Ephesus. To review using a map would be a very good idea. Make a blank map and have the children fill in the map with cities and lines as you review.

Or you can cover the stories week by week, dividing the children into groups. They could review a song, the verse, and a portion of the story, with each one having a portion they would be responsible for.

Keep the embedded thoughts in mind as you help to prepare them.

New Testament Stories

Week 71

Point to emphasize: We can speak God's word
even if it isn't what others want to hear

Reference: Acts 19:23-26

Memory verse: Exodus 20:3-5a

You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, nor the form of anything that is in heaven above or on earth beneath or in the water beneath the earth. You shall not bow down to them, and you shall not serve them,...

Story Sample:

In this story, Paul was in Asia speaking to people. Many people received what he said, but there was a particular group that was very upset with what Paul said. One man in this group was a man named Demetrius. Demetrius was a silversmith. A silversmith was someone who would melt silver and shape it into something, maybe cups or bowls. But one thing he made a lot of money for was making idols. Now, what are idols? (*Discuss*) OK, so many people in that place would buy the idols he made and worship them. (*Note: Ask the younger children if they know what an idol is and if they've ever seen one.*)

Something that Paul had been telling the people made Demetrius very upset. Paul was telling the people about a verse from the Old Testament. Exo. 20:3-5a says, "You shall have no other gods before Me." That is a very definite and strong word. God hates idols and wants us to love Him best. The Bible even says that God is jealous over us.

If people believed what Paul was saying, then Demetrius could lose all of his business! Demetrius was so upset that he told a lot of other men who had the same job, and they were all really upset. They were so angry, they wouldn't let Paul talk to any more people. Wow! What do you think Paul would do? How would you feel if you were Paul speaking for God, but it made people angry? Well, the Bible shows us in Acts that even though what he was speaking from the Bible did not make Demetrius and the other men happy, Paul was faithful to speak God's word.

(Note: Discuss how, when we speak God's word, there may be some people who disagree or strongly oppose us. Encourage the children to talk about experiences at school when they have spoken about God, or were wanting to do so but maybe were too nervous. Help them to be encouraged that this is a good thing, even if some have opposed. With older groups of children, you may have them give examples of others' reaction, positive and negative. With the younger children, just speak on the positive side in an encouraging way.)

New Testament Stories

Week 72

Point to emphasize: Be careful not to speak assumptions
as though they were facts

*****Do not bring in the matter of why Paul went into the temple. This story does not cover this point.**

Reference: Acts 21:27-36

Memory verse: Proverbs 8:7a,8

For my mouth will utter truth,...All the words of my mouth are in righteousness;
there is nothing twisted or crooked in them.

Story sample:

Paul returned to Jerusalem and was seen in the temple. At this time there were Jews from Asia who opposed and persecuted Paul while he was traveling. When they had last seen Paul he was with Greeks as his companions. Jews and Greeks did not like each other and for sure a Jew would never allow a Greek into the temple! *(use an example to illustrate prejudice – e.g. A bunch of girls are playing on the playground and a boy comes up wanting to play. The girls say "Oh no, we won't play with boys!")*

So when they saw Paul in the temple they assumed that he had brought his Greek friend with him and were not happy at all. So pay close attention to this: the Jews from Asia did **not** see a Greek with Paul in the temple, but they assumed it. What do you think they did when they saw Paul? They began accusing him according to their assumption, not according to the truth.

ASSUME (*put on the board*) - this means to suppose something is true without proof.

One day a girl came home from school and her little sister was in her toy box. When she saw her standing there she ASSUMED that her sister was getting into her toy box to take some of her toys. Right away, she raised her voice, and she started accusing her little sister of stealing her toys. Mom heard the commotion, so she went to see what was going on. The older sister started saying, "Mom, she was trying to steal my toys!" There stood the little sister with tears in her eyes not able to say a word. Mom looked at her and said, "But she was just doing what I told her. I found your bear on the floor and asked her to put it away for me. But you assumed the worst from her." She felt so bad for making the wrong assumption. *(storyteller – tell your own experiential story about the mistake of assuming something is true without first having the facts)*

Then it got worse! The Jews from Asia cried out against Paul saying he had brought a Greek into the temple. This caused the crowd in the temple to rise up in anger. Their anger against him was like a huge fire spreading throughout the crowd. The whole city was stirred up. They grabbed Paul and dragged him outside the temple.

New Testament Stories

As they grabbed Paul, a report came up to the commander of the Roman troops that all Jerusalem was in confusion. This Roman commander was responsible for law and order in this city. He at once took soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the Jews saw the commander and soldiers coming they stopped beating Paul. The commander had Paul bound with two chains. He could not find out the facts due to the uproar so he ordered the soldiers to take Paul back to the jail. They literally had to carry Paul out because the crowd was so violent. The Bible says the people were following the soldiers and crying out, "Away with him!"

Wow! What a terrible situation! And do you realize this whole riot happened because of an assumption? But fortunately the commander took the time to find out the facts about what had really happened and saved Paul from the crowd. Just because a crowd of people assume something is true does not mean it is so. Don't think that what everyone speaks are facts; often they speak assumptions. We should be careful to not speak assumptions as though they are facts.

(Note: lead children to discuss their own examples of assumptions and the problems caused)

New Testament Stories

Week 73

Point to emphasize: We need to listen to and take care of our conscience

References: Acts 22:30—23:1

Memory verse: Acts 23:1b

...I have conducted myself in all good conscience before God until this day.

Story sample:

After Paul was rescued from the crowd, he was brought back to the jail. In order to find out why the Jews had been in such an uproar because of him, the Roman commander ordered the chief priests and high court to come together. He stood Paul in their midst, and Paul had to defend himself before them. There he was, standing before a group of people who wanted to punish him severely — even to kill him. Wow! Can you imagine being in such a terrifying situation? What would Paul say? Well the Bible says Paul made this amazing statement: He said "I have conducted myself in all good conscience before God until this day." WHAT a statement! What does that mean? (*Discuss*)

Paul meant that in all he had spoken and in all that he had done, he had always paid attention to that feeling of peace within and therefore had a good conscience before God. He was being accused of doing something wrong, yet Paul could say that in what he spoke and did, Paul made sure that God was happy with his words.

Sometimes we do things that we are not supposed to do, but all the time we are doing it, something inside is telling us, "You should not be doing this." We often ignore this feeling inside that is bothering us, and we do the same wrong thing we see our friends doing, even though we know that our parents would not be happy if they saw us doing those things. Or we use the same words our friends say, even though we would never want our parents to hear us using those words. Or maybe in the morning, when our mom or dad asks us to get up and get ready, we play on the computer instead; we ignore that feeling inside telling us that we should be getting ready. Actually, that feeling is something God has given us that shows what He is happy or not happy about.

*(***storyteller - insert your own story about not listening to the inward feeling or taking care of your conscience in what you did or said.)*

Paul was able to stand before so many Jewish leaders and say that he conducted himself in all good conscience before God because he always responded when he felt the bothering feeling.

Note to storyteller: For older children, you can touch the matter of Paul taking care of his conscience. You do not need to get into the matter of confession and dealing with the conscience, but can briefly talk about how Paul took care of his conscience. For the younger children you can just touch that once we realize we did something wrong or didn't listen to the feeling in us that we were wrong, that we should say that we are sorry.

New Testament Stories

Week 74

Point to emphasize: We can encourage others by being with them.

Reference: Acts 23:2-11

Memory verse: Acts 23:11a

...the Lord stood by him and said, Take courage,...

Story sample:

The last two days had been difficult days for Paul. During the uprising in the temple he had been beaten. The Roman soldiers had to rescue Paul from the violent crowd. After being brought back to the jail he had been questioned by the soldiers to see if what he said was true. Then he was brought before the Jewish leaders, and while he defended himself the high priest commanded that he be struck. By the end of that time the crowd was mistreating him so badly Paul had to be rescued again by the Roman soldiers and taken back to the jail.

If I were Paul I would have been very discouraged being locked up in the jail again. He had been treated very badly. He must have hurt all over. And now he was alone in the Roman jail. He may well have felt very discouraged. *(Discuss how children would feel in a difficult situation.)*

But that night something wonderful and mysterious happened to Paul. The Bible says the Lord came and stood by him. No one else could be with Paul that night in the jail. But the Lord did not leave him there alone and discouraged. The Lord came and stood by him. And He said something very simple but very wonderful: "Take courage." This was God's loving care for Paul. Paul had been faithful to the Lord, and the Lord was faithful to him. What a comfort and encouragement this was to Paul that night.

One time someone I know had an operation. None of her family lived nearby so her mom could not come. But to be in a hospital room all by yourself day after day is discouraging. So some of us went and spent many hours with her. Often she was just sleeping because of the operation she had, but whenever she opened her eyes she saw one of us there. She was not alone. That was a comfort to her even though she did not feel very good. So you can see that sometimes just to be with someone else is a help.

In that situation it is not what we do. It's just to be there with them.

And as we get older we, like Paul, will know more and more the Lord's loving care for us. And we also can be those who care for others just by being with them.

(Discuss with children times they have been helped by others just being with them.)

New Testament Stories

Week 75 REVIEW

This week is a review of the previous four weeks. As an idea, invite one of the families of the children in your group to come review the stories about Paul. This will need to be done ahead of time. Give the family a set of the stories and ask them to present the stories, with each member of the family presenting one part. Remind them to keep the emphasized points in mind as they plan.

New Testament Stories

Week 76

Point to emphasize: We should always speak honestly about ourselves

Reference: Acts 24

Memory verse: Acts 24:16

Because of this I also exercise myself to always have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

Story sample:

So in our stories we have been seeing that Paul was being treated very badly again. But do you remember what happened when Paul was back in prison yet again? God encouraged him and was with him.

Five days later, Paul was to go before the Roman governor, Felix. Because he was a Roman citizen, he had the right to bring his case to the Roman government. Each side would present their side of the story, just like they do in courts today. The reason why we have courts is because sometimes people argue when they don't agree, and they need someone in authority to help them decide who is right.

Governor Felix would listen to both sides and then decide who was right and who was wrong. First, the Jewish high priest named Ananias with some other men and an orator named Tertullus gave their information to the governor. Do you know what an orator is? An orator is a public speaker, someone who is very good at making speeches. In his speech, Tertullus called Paul a "pest" (someone annoying or who causes trouble or is a problem) and "an agitator" (a person who tries to get people angry or upset). Then others started joining Tertullus in attacking Paul.

(Use a personal example of when you and your sibling were arguing and went to your mom to resolve it. Emphasize the point that even when we disagree, we should be polite to listen to what the other person has to say.)

Now finally it was Paul's turn to speak. Wow, can you imagine how he felt after so many accusations against him? Paul gave his side of the story about what happened in the temple. He said that the people accusing him couldn't prove what they accused him of. Remember that they accused Paul based on assumptions and not facts?

Then Paul spoke something about himself. You see, their problem had more to do with who Paul was than what he had done. So Paul defended himself. He explained that he stood for God: he served God, he believed God's Word, he had hope toward God, and he had a good conscience.

Remember that we saw in another story that Paul was someone who always listened and took care of his conscience. He spoke honestly about himself. He believed he had done nothing to offend God or any man. He had nothing to lie about because he always took care of his conscience.

New Testament Stories

*(Discuss: When you do something wrong but are afraid that your parents will be angry, do you still tell them the truth? If you don't, don't you feel really bad inside? **NOTE:** Discuss how you can take care of your conscience by telling the truth when you are bothered inside. If we take care of our conscience, then we can always speak honestly about who we are and what we have done, just like Paul.)*

New Testament Stories

Week 77

Point to emphasize: We shouldn't do something wrong
in order to gain favor with others

Reference: Acts 25:6-12

Memory verse: Proverbs 14:5a

A faithful witness will not lie...

Story sample:

Last week we left Paul defending himself in front of Felix, the governor. After hearing both sides it was obvious that Paul had not committed any crime and should be released. But do you know what happened? Governor Felix left him in prison. Of course this was not right.

Now there was a new governor. His name was Festus. What do you think Festus will do with Paul? The situation was that those who were against Paul came to Festus asking for a favor against Paul, and Festus wanted to gain favor with them.

So Paul stood before Festus to be judged. The people who disliked Paul came bringing many serious charges against him. But they were not able to prove any of them. Paul spoke in his own defense saying that he had not done anything against the Jewish law or the temple or the Roman government. Since no one could prove anything against Paul, Festus should have released him, right? He wanted to gain favor with the Jews so he did not release Paul. This is terrible! What does it mean to gain the favor of others?

I'm sure you have seen this. Let me give you an example of what happened to me... When I was in elementary school there was a girl who was very popular. This girl had a lot of very nice things that she brought to school to show to others. If she liked you, she would let you wear her fancy sweater during recess or let you use her special pen in class. So some of the girls tried to gain her favor. They really did not like her that much, but they wanted to gain her favor so that she would share all her fancy things with them. These girls would do things like giving her the first turn in a game or saving the first place in line for her so that they could gain her favor.

****Storyteller-insert your own story of being either righteous or unrighteous to gain favor with others. Discuss with the children, according to their level, what it means to gain favor of others. With the older children you might want to discuss even further with them that when you are saying things or doing things to gain favor with others, you might end up saying or doing things that are not who you are or who your parents are helping you to be. You are then not true to yourself, to God, nor to them.*

Paul was not there to gain anyone's favor. He was only being right with God, with himself and with others. Paul was not afraid of a fair judgment. He even told Festus that if he was doing wrong or had committed anything worthy of death, he did not refuse to

New Testament Stories

die. But if Festus was going to hand him over to the people in order to gain favor with the Jews then Paul had to appeal to a higher Roman authority. If Festus was not going to treat him fairly then Paul had to appeal to the highest Roman authority. And this is just what Paul did. He appealed his case to Caesar, the highest judicial authority.

New Testament Stories

Week 78

Point to emphasize: We can be dignified in a difficult situation

Reference: Acts 27:1-44 & 28:9 Note 1

Memory verse: Phil 4:8

Finally, brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things.

Story sample:

Last week we heard how Paul chose to appeal to Caesar. Now why did he do this? Right, he was being treated badly by the people, and the Roman governor was not handling his case righteously. In order to save his life, Paul made an appeal to bring his case to Caesar. Now who was Caesar, and where was he? He was the top emperor of the Roman government that ruled the entire known world at that time. Caesar was very powerful and lived in the capital city of Rome. So Paul was now being sent all the way to Rome to appeal to Caesar. Paul didn't argue or fight, but rather appealed to Caesar, acting in a dignified way.

He was very dignified in such a difficult situation. What does "dignified" mean? (*Discuss the meaning with the children.*)

Now let's see what happened to Paul and how he reacted as he went on his journey to Rome.

Paul and his companions and the Roman guards who were watching him all loaded into a ship and set sail for the long journey to Rome. At first the trip went well, but after some time the winds got very bad. They stopped at one place for supplies, and Paul advised them to be cautious, that he could see that the voyage would be dangerous and that they would lose a lot—the cargo, the ship, and even the lives of those on board. But the soldier in charge didn't listen and ordered the journey to continue.

So they traveled on and eventually the winds became a hurricane. The men tried everything to save the ship. They tried to strengthen the bottom of the ship, then they tried throwing the cargo overboard to lighten the ship, and then they tried throwing the ship's gear overboard. Nothing seemed to help. By this time they had not eaten food for some time and were surely exhausted and discouraged. Wow, what a terrible situation for Paul and everyone around him!

Have you ever been in a difficult situation? You may think that nothing like what happened to Paul could ever happen to you. But what about this? What if at the breakfast table your younger sister spilled milk on your homework and ruined it? Would you yell at her? Or would you tell her it was okay, that you knew it was an accident. Could you act in a dignified way? What if you forgot your colored pencils at home that you needed for some work at school? Would you fuss at your mom for not reminding

New Testament Stories

you to bring them? Or would you accept responsibility in a dignified way and try to find a solution?

So, what do you think Paul did? In this bad situation Paul did something amazing. He stood calmly and spoke to the whole crew, encouraging them to not give up and to cheer up. He even told them that every single person would survive this terrible storm. Isn't that amazing? And so onward they went for 14 more days being tossed about in the wind with no sun or moon or lights in the sky, and suddenly the ship began to approach shore. Everyone was really terrified that the ship would run aground and break up. And now again Paul stood and spoke words of encouragement to cheer everyone up and have them eat food for strength.

Sure enough, when the next day came, they saw they were nearing land, so they directed the ship toward the beach. The ship hit a sandbar and started to break up. Those who could swim jumped off first and swam to the land. Then they were followed by those who hung on to planks and parts of the broken ship. And in the end, **all** 276 on the boat were saved - just as Paul had said. Paul had survived this terrible situation and had done so in such a dignified way.

New Testament Stories

Week 79

Point to emphasize: We can show kindness to others,
even to the ones we don't know

Reference: Acts 27:44—28:1-10

Memory verse: Proverbs 14:31b

...But he who is gracious to the needy honors Him (God).

*****Storytellers: do not bring in the part about the snake and the people treating Paul like a god. This point is not being covered.**

Story sample:

After all the men traveling with Paul were brought safely to land on the island of Malta, the native people of the island showed them great kindness. It was very cold due to the storm and the rain so the island people built a fire to warm them.

Then a leading man from Malta, Publius, welcomed them and arranged places to stay for all 276 of them for three days. This was really a great kindness to them. They were shipwrecked without any supplies, no place to stay, and nothing to eat. Publius took care of all of their needs.

It is pretty easy to be kind to someone we know and like. But what about being helpful, warmhearted, or generous with ones we don't even know?

One time, years ago, there was an earthquake in a city. The earthquake affected only parts of the city. But many people in that city did things to help the others who had lost their homes in the quake. Even high schoolers volunteered to go and help with clean up. All of this help from others was a real kindness to those in need. They really appreciated all the help that others gave. *(Storyteller-insert your own story of showing kindness to someone you don't know by helping them.)*

It turns out that Publius' dad was quite sick. Paul went to him, prayed and healed him. What a joy this was to the dad and his family. Then, the rest of the people on the island who were sick soon heard that Paul had healed this man and they too came to be healed. His heart was so big that he could care for all who came.

When a ship was ready to sail, the natives from the island put on board the ship all the supplies that the 276 men would need for the rest of their voyage. This showed their great respect for them.

So how much kindness was shown in this story? *(let the children help list these points)*

1. The island people were kind to build a fire to keep them warm.
2. Publius was kind to arrange hospitality for all those men.

New Testament Stories

3. Paul showed kindness when he healed all who were ill.
4. The island people showed kindness when they loaded the ship with all the supplies that were needed for the rest of the voyage.
5. God was so kind to have brought them through the storm and to have arranged so much care for Paul and his companions.

Our verse today says, "But he who is gracious to the needy honors Him (God)." When we are kind to others, we are honoring God. So let's all see if we can be kind to someone we don't know this week, OK?

New Testament Stories

Week 80

Point to emphasize: We can open our home to others

Reference: Acts 28:11-31

Memory verse: Romans 12:13

Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality.

Last week we saw how God cared for Paul and all those who were on the ship that was wrecked in the storm on the island of Malta.

And so Paul and those with him headed on for Rome. They boarded a ship and traveled on to Rome. Wow, what an incredible journey all the way from Jerusalem, across the sea and a shipwreck and being saved and finally reaching Rome, the capital of the whole Roman empire. And when they arrived, believers from far away came to meet them, because they had heard reports of what had been happening to Paul. And the Bible says, "...and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage." (v.15) Paul was so happy to see them! And they were so happy to see him!

Have you all noticed this sometimes with your parents? Like at training time—people come from all over the world for the training. And your parents are so glad to see the ones who love the Lord come from all over! It is a big encouragement to see so many of God's people coming together. So, there is usually a lot of praying and thanking God that goes on in our houses. This is called the household of God and it is so good when we can all get together!

So, Paul had finally arrived in Rome. And in Rome, he was allowed to stay by himself in his own lodging, along with the soldier who was guarding him. Although he was being guarded, he was also free in a way. He was free to speak. This was the best freedom for him! People could come to where he lived, and he could speak from morning to night about Jesus. Some who came believed and some did not believe. But still he continued to speak. For two years Paul did this in his home, speaking boldly about God without being stopped from speaking.

And this is how the book of Acts ends in the Bible. But really the book of Acts hasn't ended. To this very day there are still people who open their homes to have others come in and speak about God, Jesus, the Law and the Prophets. Maybe even your own parents open their homes for this, to have others come to share with one another about God. Or maybe they go to someone else's house to do this.

OR maybe even you can do this! Do some of you have neighbor kids and friends come to your house each week for a story, a snack and some singing? Or maybe you go to someone else's house to do this. See, you are doing the same thing Paul did in the book of Acts! Isn't that great? This means you can actually be the continuation of the book of Acts and that the stories of the Bible are still continuing today! [Discuss experiences of opening their homes.]

New Testament Stories

Week 81 REVIEW

This week is a review of the previous five weeks. Try to have the children involved in the review as much as possible. As an idea, make some games to help them remember the stories. (e.g. Word search, crossword puzzle, etc. - You can find help to do this online). Do it as a rotation, a different game for each story. The serving ones can sit at a table with the children and talk about the stories as they work. Keep the emphasized points in mind as you plan.

New Testament Stories

Week 82

Point to emphasize: We should respond immediately when we are called

Reference: Mark 1:16-18

Memory verse: Mark 1:18

And immediately leaving the nets, they followed Him.

Story sample:

We have been hearing many stories about Paul. Do you know that Paul wrote 14 books in the New Testament? So of course we have so many stories from all his journeys. But Paul is not the only one we can read about in the New Testament. There were others who traveled and spoke to others about Jesus. You see, the Lord called many different kinds of people to follow Him.

Does anyone remember who was there fishing when Jesus called them to follow Him? Yes, Peter was there and also his brother Andrew. They were young men, but already they were working and making a living as fishermen. When Jesus called out to them to follow Him, what did they do? Yes, they just simply dropped what they were doing and followed Jesus.

Now, let's look closely at your memory verse. What does it say? [Have children recite and write "immediately" on the board] So, do did you notice the word IMMEDIATELY? That means they stopped what they were doing and came RIGHT THEN! Responding immediately when we are called sounds so easy, right? What if the President was here and he asked you to come do something important? How would you respond? BUT often we don't respond so fast. And sometimes we don't respond at all. Maybe we even ignore it. Think about some times when your mom calls you to do something you really don't want to do.

I was at someone's house recently and you know what happened? The mom called one of the kids to come and start their homework. Who here likes to do homework? Well, it was as if the child suddenly could hear nothing. There was no response to the mom's call. Can you believe it? Of course mom did not give up and eventually she had to go and lead the child by the hand to the table to do homework. Isn't this a shameful way to respond? [*storyteller may substitute with a short experience of not responding immediately*]

So here the Bible says "Immediately!" Right? Peter and Andrew immediately left what they were doing. You know, the Lord's calling can come to all different kinds of people and in many different ways. Peter and Andrew were not extra-ordinary people. They were just a couple of young fishermen. They did not need a special educational degree to fish. And yet, the Lord called them that day. And they responded immediately.

All of you here can also learn and practice to be those who respond the same way.

New Testament Stories

Week 83

Point to emphasize: We should think before we speak

Reference: Matthew 17:24-27

Memory verse: Proverbs 16:23a

The heart of the wise man instructs his mouth. . .

Story sample:

Today we're going to hear more about what Peter was like. Jesus and Peter and Andrew and the other disciples had all travelled to the city of Capernaum. In that place there were men going around collecting taxes. Now, do you know what taxes are? Yes, taxes are a small amount of extra money you have to pay to official government people to pay for the things that we use, such as roads or buildings. So listen to what happened: when the tax collectors came to Peter they asked him a very accusing question, "Does Jesus pay this tax?"

Now we don't know for sure what Peter was thinking, but right away he declared "YES!" But you see, Peter didn't really know this for sure. Perhaps he should have said, "I don't know. Let me go and ask." Do you see the problem? Has this ever happened to you? Unfortunately, Peter blurted something out instead. Peter often spoke instantly and impulsively, and it got him into trouble. When he came into the house, Jesus was there waiting for him. He already knew what happened. He said, "What do you think, Simon?" And then he explained to Peter that He was not required to pay this tax.

Wow, can you imagine how Peter must have felt? Have you ever blurted out something and then later found out you were wrong? Maybe you even got in trouble for it. It is an awful feeling. One time our teacher announced to the class that we were all going on an awesome field trip to an aquarium. But wait a minute: it required some money to pay for the bus and the ticket to get in. My goodness, I was so excited to go. I really wanted to go. Without even thinking, I raised my hand high and spoke up that I could go, that I had the money to go. But, when I got home my mom was there waiting. She already knew all about it. She said, "I'm sorry, but we have other things planned and don't have the money. Why didn't you ask me first?" Oh, you see this example? I had spoken too quickly and put my mom in a terrible place. Haven't you done this sometime? [Open for some short discussions]

So, coming back to Peter and Jesus, and of course something must be done to fix the problem. Peter had already said "yes," and the collectors were expecting the money to pay the tax for Peter and for Jesus. So listen to how Peter had to learn his lesson. You never heard anything like it before. Jesus told Peter, ". . . go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up. And when you open its mouth, you will find a stater (coin); take that and give it to them for Me and you."

Isn't that incredible? What a lesson Peter learned that day! In an instant Peter spoke without thinking and caused a problem. But was the problem fixed in an instant? NO!!!

New Testament Stories

Peter had to go out of the city to the sea. He had to get the fishing gear and then cast into the sea. And how long do you think he sat there fishing? I think Peter probably had a long time to consider what a problem he had caused by speaking without thinking. I hope all of you would also consider how you speak and learn this same lesson.

New Testament Stories

Week 84

Point to Emphasize: We should be proper to lead others
and proper to follow others

Reference: John 21:1-12

Memory verse: Proverbs 8:33

Hear instruction, and be wise; And do not neglect it.

Sample story:

Have you ever noticed that when you get together with 3 or 4 of your friends usually someone becomes the leader? That one will suggest what to do and everyone else seems to follow that suggestion. The leader can cause the others to do one thing or another just by suggesting it! Today we have another story about Peter and the disciples and how Peter was just such a leader among them.

So here is what happened: the Lord Jesus had told the disciples to wait in the city of Jerusalem. One day seven of them got together. Peter was among them. And we aren't sure why – maybe he was getting tired of waiting or maybe he was getting hungry – but anyway Peter announced to them all that he was going fishing. Yes, fishing! Oh, leave it to Peter to lead the others into getting in trouble.

Now who remembers what Peter did before he met the Lord Jesus? Yes – he was a fisherman. And if you ever have known a fisherman, you know that it's very hard for a fisherman to sit still and not be fishing! So sure enough Peter and six others all headed out to the Sea of Tiberias which was far away from where they had been told to wait. So do you see the problem? To go fishing meant that they had to leave the city of Jerusalem. Hadn't Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem? What kind of leader was Peter being? But here he was, leading the group to go the wrong way.

So I wonder how you would feel about leaving Jerusalem when Jesus had told you to stay in the city? I know that I would have felt a little twinge of guilt in my heart. What about when you might follow someone to do something against what your parents said? [*Discuss experiences of this and how the children felt, making the point of feeling guilty.*]

So listen to what the Bible says happened: that night this group of seven got into a boat and fished. And fishing at night is the best time to catch fish. And some of them were professional fishermen. That means that they knew how to catch fish. BUT guess what happened? That night no matter where they cast their nets, they got no fish. Each time they cast their net and hauled it back into the boat they got no fish at all - ZERO!! Again and again, all night they cast that net on this side and that side, and each time they hauled it back into the boat. EMPTY!!

Soon the sun began to rise. Their stomachs were probably grumbling now. Far away on the seashore they could see Someone, but couldn't tell who He was. Soon this Person

New Testament Stories

called out to them, “. . . YOU DO NOT HAVE ANY FISH TO EAT, DO YOU?” They answered Him, “NO”. Then, after a moment, He cried out again, “CAST THE NET ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE BOAT, AND YOU WILL FIND SOME.” What?!? REALLY!?! Who was this that would suggest such a thing? Of course, throughout the whole night they had cast the net on both the right and left side of the boat and caught nothing. Now, it was morning, and now was not even the right time to fish. But this Man on the seashore had the boldness to tell them what to do! What would you think if you were there on the boat with Peter? Well, the Bible tells us that they went ahead and did as instructed. They cast the net to the right and – wow! Something began to happen! It was impossible! The net was suddenly overflowing with fish. It was so full of fish that they couldn’t even pull it in. Can you imagine? It must have been pandemonium!?!

Right about this time, one of the young men on the boat finally recognized Who was on the seashore. It was the Lord Jesus! When Peter found out, he threw himself into the sea and swam directly to the shore. Meanwhile others were rowing and struggling and pulling the net full of fish. Finally, wet and tired and hungry and out of breath, they found their way to the shore and made their way over to Jesus. And you know what was there? There, they saw a fire of coals where fish were already cooking. And there was bread. And Jesus was there, and He kindly invited them to have breakfast.

Wow, what do you think they were feeling at that moment? We don’t know for sure, but it must have been these seven felt very guilty because they had not followed what the Lord told them to do. Instead they had followed Peter to do something else. Most likely they felt ashamed. I would think that Peter felt the worst. He had taken the lead to bring them out of Jerusalem to the sea to go fishing instead of waiting in Jerusalem as the Lord had instructed.

I hope all of you would learn from this story to be proper to lead others, and also proper when we are following others. *[Conclude by discussing how to be careful when leading others and to also be careful when following others.]*

New Testament Stories

Week 85

Point to emphasize: As we learn from our mistakes,
we can become a leader for others to follow

IMPORTANT: In this story do not discuss specifics of Judas or the Pentecost.

Reference: Acts 1:15, 21-25, 2:5, 14

Memory verse: Proverbs 9:9

Impart something to a wise man, and he will become wiser still; Teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.

Story sample:

So we are continuing with our stories about Peter. Wow – what can you say about Peter? What were the two stories about Peter getting into trouble so far? [Discuss speaking without thinking and being an improper leader]. Today we want to see something wonderful about Peter. The Bible shows us that Peter went through some hard lessons, and he learned from his mistakes, and actually became an advanced follower of the Lord. You see, isn't it wonderful to make progress and learn all these lessons?

So at the beginning of Acts there was a serious problem to be solved. Jesus had originally chosen 12 disciples, but by this time a few years later there were only 11. And you see, to only have 11 meant that you could not pair up into two's, and it's always better to go with someone else. There needed to be an even 12. It is here that Peter took the lead. He stood up among the brothers and instead of blurting out a solution, he spoke with more consideration. He quoted the Old Testament to bring in a clear explanation of what should be done. It was obvious that he had taken the time to consider the situation before he spoke. And as a result this problem was solved, and once again there were 12 disciples together in Jerusalem.

Do you see this progress? I remember when I was in elementary school; I always blurted out answers during class. But by the time I got to junior high, I had realized that it is best to be careful and sure and considerate of others. *[Here you may insert your own experience of maturity in speaking out as you grew older]*

Not long after this, there was another wonderful story about Peter. Around that time in Jerusalem there was a gathering of many people. They were coming for a great feast, and because they came from all over, they spoke many different languages. There was such a big crowd and so many coming and going. And this time Peter did something wonderful. Once again he was a leader. But this time he did not lead in the wrong way. All the 12 disciples were there, and Peter took the lead. They all stood up together and Peter began to speak to the whole crowd. And he spoke in a dignified and solemn way to this crowd, all about the Lord Jesus and all the wonderful things about God.

New Testament Stories

Can you believe what a different person Peter was now? He had learned from his mistakes. He now considered before he spoke. He led others in a proper way. I hope we can all be encouraged by this story to learn these lessons as children as we grow up in God's household.

New Testament Stories

Week 86 Review

Review the stories by dividing the children into 4 groups. They can rotate to each group after 10-15 minutes, playing the game first, then reminding them about the story.

Games to play:

1. Simon Says: (for responding immediately)
2. Answer First: (for speaking too soon)
Have a list of questions that would require a yes or no answer. (e.g. Do you always obey your mom?) Put them each on a scrap of paper, fold them, and put them in a box. Call on a child to come up and draw one. Before he/she can unfold it, they should answer yes or no. Then read the question. If the answer is wrong, point out to them why they shouldn't speak too soon. (They have a 50/50 chance of getting it right. This will keep them on their toes, even though they can't be sure they will ever be right)
3. Memory verse game: (for learning from mistakes) Use all 4 verses. Have them repeat if they make a mistake. (e.g. Hangman, verse card shuffle, etc.)
4. Follow the leader: (for being a leader or a follower)

New Testament Stories

Week 87

Point to emphasize: We should not be a respecter of persons
but treat everyone the same

Reference: Acts 10:17-48

Memory verse: Acts 10:34b

...In truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons,

Story sample:

Peter had been staying in the city of Joppa. At this point in history, there were two groups of people and Peter's preference was toward one of these groups. All his life he had been raised in a way to be separated from those of the other group. For example, one from one group would not sit down and eat with one from the other group. This is how Peter grew up, and this is what he practiced. During one of his prayer times, the Lord showed Peter that all people were the same to Him. He did not respect one group more than the other. This was hard for Peter to understand at first. But at that time the Lord Jesus was making it clear to him that God accepted them all, and they were the same. There should not be this separation any more.

How would you feel if at school the teacher only cared for all the children who were tall? If you were short, no matter how good of a student you were, the teacher would never be pleased with you. All the children who were tall got to have fun in the classroom and those who were short were sent to detention. Would this be fair? Of course not! This is much like the situation with Peter. He was taught, from his youth, not to care for the other group of people (like those who were short). But the Lord showed him that this was no longer acceptable. The time had come to care for all men the same.

According to the story in the Bible, after Peter realized God had accepted both groups of people some men came to the house where Peter was staying. They wanted him to come to Caesarea to visit a man named Cornelius, who wanted to see Peter. Cornelius belonged to the other group that Peter had been taught to not mix with. How do you think Peter would have felt? Surely he would have been in trouble with his peers if he was found with this other group. However, since the Lord spoke directly to Peter he knew right away that he was to go with them. When he arrived, Cornelius had gathered all his family and friends to listen to Peter speak the gospel to them. Peter spoke to all those gathered, and they all believed in the Lord and were baptized. He even spent a number of days with these new believers sharing God's Word and having meals together with them. He did not practice being separated from these ones. Even though he had been raised that way, he realized that the separation did not need to be practiced anymore.

Peter said to Cornelius, "In truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons..." What does this mean? Peter now knew that God counted all men the same and that he should do likewise. He should treat everyone the same and not consider one group more special than the other.

****storyteller-insert your own story of when you wrongly treated a person differently than you should have.*

New Testament Stories

Week 88

Point to emphasize: We shouldn't give up; we should always be faithful

Reference: 2 Peter 1:14; John 21:18-19

Memory Verse: Psalm 4:3a

But know that Jehovah sets apart the faithful man for Himself...

Story sample:

Today I'd like to talk about Peter some more. We all know Peter made some mistakes, don't we? We've heard several stories about his mistakes. But it would not be fair to end our story about Peter with just knowing that he made mistakes. Peter learned from his mistakes and he grew in the Lord to become a faithful person. He was also faithful, even up to the end of his life. Who can tell me what faithful means? (*Write their answers on the board as they give them—loyal, constant, trustworthy, steadfast, true, etc.*) Now, I don't see anything about making mistakes on the board, do you? That's because being faithful has nothing to do with making mistakes. We all make mistakes. But that doesn't mean we can't be faithful.

When I was in third grade, I made a HUGE mistake. My mom let me invite some classmates over to our place. I was so excited! I even made invitations to pass out. So, the day came and I was passing out the invitations to some of the kids in the class as we were lining up to go to recess. Well, the mistake was that I did not invite everyone in the class. I only had invitations for 10 of the kids in the class. So while we were lining up I was giving this one an invitation while the others around her got nothing. Many of the kids were getting upset because they realized that they were not getting invited. Eventually the teacher found out what was happening, and I really got into trouble. I really should not have passed out invitations with all the other kids around. I felt so bad. I felt so bad that I did not want to be in that class any more. I did not want to have to see those kids again. But what could I do? I couldn't quit school or move to another class even though I wanted to. I had to see it through. ****storyteller—insert your own story showing how you made a huge mistake but couldn't quit, you had to stick around.*

Maybe Peter felt like this sometimes. He made a lot of mistakes. Sometimes he spoke too quickly, making promises he could not keep (like when he spoke about Jesus paying taxes); sometimes he did things just because his friends were doing them. These are the kinds of mistakes we all make. I am sure he felt just AWFUL every time he made a mistake. Maybe there were times when he wanted to quit, wanted never to see the disciples again. But something made him stick it out. Peter was faithful to the Lord for many, many years.

In the gospels, Peter sometimes appeared to be foolish, especially in how he spoke. While he was with Jesus, he didn't always understand everything. But he didn't give up. He faithfully followed Jesus. As he got older, he began to understand more. This man who began following Jesus as a very young, uneducated fisherman was changed. He began to speak the word of God to large groups of people. Often, he took the lead

New Testament Stories

among the twelve disciples, both to speak and to make decisions. He was even thrown in prison later for following the Lord.

Eventually, Peter wrote two books of the Bible. Can anyone tell me which books he wrote? (*1 & 2 Peter—have a child find the books in the Recovery Version of the Bible, showing who, where, and when the books were written*) In these two books there are some wonderful expressions describing things about Jesus that aren't in **any** other book of the Bible. Think about it—if he had given up just because he made some mistakes, we would never have had those two books of the Bible! He was faithful to the very end.

I hope we would all aspire to be faithful. While we are young, we need to be faithful to take care of the small things. Then, as we get older we will be able to be faithful in the big things.

We should be those that are faithful even when we make mistakes.

New Testament Stories

Week 89

Point to emphasize: We can grow up learning God's Word

References: Acts 16:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:15

Memory verse: 2 Timothy 1:5

Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded dwells also in you.

Story Sample:

Today we're going to talk about Timothy. He's one of the many persons who began to follow the Lord Jesus when they were quite young. Can you think of a few others in the Bible?

Timothy was a young man when Paul (remember Paul?) travelled through his city. In his city, Timothy was highly spoken of. So even though he was young, Paul wanted to take him along on a difficult journey. We really do not know how old Timothy or Paul was. But we do know that Paul was quite a bit older than Timothy. It could be that Paul and the others they travelled with were twice as old as Timothy. How could someone so young be able to travel with Paul and the older people to go and preach the gospel everywhere?

One reason was that from the time he was a very young child, Timothy knew God's word. Both his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice, had faith in God and loved God's word. He had grown up learning God's word and seeing his grandmother's and mom's strong faith in God. It may be that Timothy, his mom, and his grandmother had times together in God's word. Maybe Timothy and his mother prayed and sang songs to the Lord together.

Even as young children we can sing songs with our hearts to the Lord with our family, and we can be in God's word together. I know one family who read a verse together before they eat dinner. Another family might sing songs like, "Our God is so big" as they drive in the car. I heard of one dad who each morning would wake up his kids by going into their rooms to sing to them. ****Storyteller: Insert your own example of how your family does something related to God together.*

There are many ways with our family that we can be like Timothy growing up knowing God's word and loving the Lord. Can any of us share when your family prayed or sang or said a verse together? Maybe we can even do it today. Let's all think what we would want to do with our family today. *(Have kids share what they want to do.)* OK, let's make a list so we can remember these ideas for later. *(Later, have the kids make a card to give to their family when they get picked up. Inside the card the kids should write something like: my family can sing a favorite song together today OR my family can read our new verse together before we eat today.)*

New Testament Stories

Week 90

Point to emphasize: We can be patterns in what we say and in what we do

References: 1 Tim. 4:12

Memory verse: 1 Timothy 4:12

Let no one despise your youth, but be a pattern to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

Story Sample:

In the Bible Paul charged Timothy to be a pattern in word and in conduct. Often people who we look up to as patterns are a lot older than us. But here Paul is strongly telling a young one that he must be a pattern in how to talk to others, in what kind of words he lets come out of his mouth.

All around us at your school, at the park, at stores, and on our sports team other children let all kinds of words come out of their mouths. It is often the "in" thing to say certain words. Oh, they may not be bad words. It may be words like "cool" or "sweet" (Note to storyteller: insert current word, if possible). Or it may even be a word you don't know what it means. If you hear others saying that over and over again, pretty soon you say it too. But there are other words we hear that we know should not come out of our mouth. No matter how often we hear them at school or the park we know that we shouldn't say these things.

Maybe this is how Timothy became a pattern in word. He certainly must have taken care of what words came out of his mouth. And he probably took care of how he spoke to others. I may say the right words, but my attitude is very impolite.

When I was young, one day I got angry with my sister, and I said something that was not very nice to her. My mom heard this happen and asked me to apologize. I have to say that I obeyed my mom and I said I was sorry, but the way that I said it was in a very mean way. It was the right thing to say BUT with the wrong attitude. (***)*Storyteller-share your own story of being a positive pattern in word to others.*)

Paul also told Timothy to be a good pattern in his conduct, in how he behaved and acted.

One night we had a number of boys over for dinner. After we were done eating I started to clear the dirty plates from the table. One of these boys stood up and started doing the same. Soon another joined him, and then two of them were

New Testament Stories

cleaning up. I really appreciated their help. Now tell me, what caused the second boy to start cleaning the dirty dishes from the table? *(Let the children guess)* Right! He was following the pattern of the first one.

I have seen this in a negative way, too. One time I was at a fast food place and a group of junior high students came in and ordered, and they asked for cups for water. But when the first one went to fill up his cup, he looked around and while his friends were watching he filled it with soda. The others followed him and filled their cups up with soda too. Instead of paying for the soda, they stole it. The first one became a negative pattern in conduct—he stole by filling his cup with soda that he did not pay for. (****Storyteller-share your own story where one becomes a negative pattern to the others.*)

We should follow the ones who are good patterns in what they say and in what they do. Not only that, but WE should be the ones who are good patterns in what we say and in what we do. Even while we are young we can all be a pattern in word and in conduct. Let's practice for the rest of this morning to be a pattern to others in what we say, how we say it, and in what we do.

New Testament Stories

Week 91 Review

This week is a review of the previous four weeks. Try to have the children involved in the review as much as possible. As an idea, make some games to help them remember the stories. (eg. Word search, crossword puzzle, etc. — You can find help to do this online). Do it as a rotation, a different game for each story. The serving ones can sit at a table with the children and talk about the stories as they work. Keep the emphasized points in mind as you plan. Remember to work out your time so that each rotation is the same. You will only have about 10 minutes per story.

OR...

This is the final review for the New Testament stories before we move on to a new direction of stories. You could do a general overview of the New Testament, rather than concentrating on the last four stories. Play a memory game using the books of the New Testament, to help familiarize them with the names of the books. Give them a word of anticipation for what will come next – that we are going to begin Old Testament stories.