

Date February 20, 2022

Scripture/Bible Story/Theme

Acts of the Apostles 13, 14, 16 – The Adventures of Paul

Children's Illustrated Bible – p. 300-301 (note: - second half of same section begun last wk)

God can change and transform lives

Workshop Name

Puppet presentation- Paul

For the teachers:

The meaning of the story in a nutshell:

When Saul, later known as Paul, met Jesus on the Road to Damascus, his life was dramatically changed.

Encountering Jesus can transform our lives as well, if we are willing to have our eyes opened and become one of his disciples.

The following notes from the Workshop Rotation site are lengthy, but they do give a deeper understanding of Paul and that in turn may be helpful to the teachers as they teach the lessons in this unit.

Bible Background Notes for Teachers

It is easy to understand why Jesus chose to appear to Saul.

Saul was a man immersed in three cultures - Greek, Roman, and Jewish. He was trained in the scriptures as Pharisee (Acts 22). And he could support himself as a tentmaker wherever he went (Acts 18). This made Saul uniquely equipped for taking Christ's message beyond the Jewish world, and into the Greek and Roman world.

What this says to us is that our gifts, however mis-used or undeveloped, can be re-directed by Christ for his purposes, and that none of us is so damaged or "wrong" as to be beyond Christ's transformative reach.

What do we know about Saul?

Saul was born around the year 3 AD in Tarsus in southern Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey. Tarsus was a bustling commercial center brimming with Greek culture, education, and philosophy. It is believed that Saul came from a relatively wealthy family because he had Roman citizenship (which could be purchased), and because his letters reveal him to be well-educated.

In Acts 22, Luke tells us that Saul was a student of Gamaliel, a famed Jewish scholar in Jerusalem. In Philippians 3, Paul describes himself as a Pharisee. Pharisees were not priests, they were students of scripture who tried to enforce their strict interpretations and practices on others, believing that their salvation came through their own right-ness ("righteousness") of belief and practice.

It is questionable how closely Saul followed Gamaliel's teachings. In Acts 5:38-39, Luke describes Gamaliel as convincing the Sanhedrin not to kill the followers of Jesus, but instead, warning them that "*If their plans and actions only come from people, they will fail. But if their plans come from God, you won't be able to stop them.*" Yet, according to Acts 7, the men who stoned Stephen "laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul."

Using a term from today's headlines, we could say that **at some point Saul became "radicalized."** By Acts 9, he is on his way with authority to persecute Jesus' followers in Damascus.

What this says to us is that no one, however, wrong or evil, is out of Jesus' reach.

Paul's Point of View on his Past and Transformation

In Philippians 3, Paul makes his case that his former point of view as a "faultless" Pharisee is now to be counted as "garbage" (waste, useless). **This theme of his world and perspective on his Jewish faith being turned upside down**, would be revisited by Paul many times. But rather than rejecting the past, he simply described it as something that was to be put in the past, The Old Testament and old ways simply prepared us for the transformation of God.

"this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13-14)

This theme should not be lost in our teaching. Saul was very religious, but that was not enough. Paul does not convert from one religion to another. He does not exchange one set of rules for another. **Paul's encounter with Christ transformed his entire understanding of "religion."** Instead of thinking we are saved by religious rules and practices, Paul repeatedly speaks about grace and love, forgiveness and tolerance. Paul's Good News finds its fullest expression in 1 Corinthians 13 where he describes "a more excellent way" —the way of Love.

Saul to Paul: What's in a name?

"Saul" literally means "**the one you prayed for**" or "the one you asked for" —which is reference to the people's demand for a king in 1 Samuel 8. But Saul always refers to himself by the Greek (Gentile) name of "Paul," which can be translated as "**small**" or "**humble.**" And in numerous letters, he refers to his "weakness" and "humility." So while some commentators simply ascribe the name change to a common custom among Jewish families living in the Gentile world to have both a Hebrew and a Gentile name, we can be sure that to Paul, his Gentile name was a perspective as well.

Perhaps not so coincidentally, our students are "small" in age and stature, and their talents are only beginning to be revealed. In a world that encourages them to "be big," "be the answer to prayer" or be #1 (literally: "be Saul"), "be gifted." Paul's name change and experience points us in a different direction. **It is the upward call that humble-Paul now values, and calls us to strive for** (Philippians 3).

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord,

Thank you for your power to transform people and things in our world. Learning about Paul has helped us understand you and your wonderful power. Amen.

Objectives

1. Locate the story of Paul in the Book of Acts.
2. Outline the basics of Paul's story, who's in it, what happened.
3. Describe how Saul/Paul was transformed by meeting and believing in Jesus.
4. Children will locate the following places on the map: Tarsus, Damascus, Jerusalem
5. Know that Jesus' "amazing grace" reaches out even to those who resist him or hate him.
6. Discuss ways Jesus encounters us and changes us, and steps we can take to help others "see" Jesus and become his disciple.

Supplies

Tongue depressors

Scissors, tape, glue – hopefully you will have these at home

Characters for the script are below - There is no character for the "crowd".

Activity

The following vocabulary will be helpful to go over before beginning the activity.

Pharisee – Jewish leaders who were very careful to follow all of God's laws and rules that they made up.

Gentile – someone who is not Jewish

Temple – the center of worship and religious life in Jerusalem

Synagogue – Jewish places of worship and study in cities and towns

Jerusalem – center of Jewish religious life

Damascus – one of the oldest cities in Paul’s time, where he was going when he was blinded and heard Jesus speak

Tarsus – capital city of Cilicia, in modern day Turkey, where Saul was born

Persecution – causing other people to suffer because of what they believe

The youth are to cut out the characters from the story. Glue or tape the characters onto the tongue depressors so that each character in the story has a puppet. Note no character for the crowd.

Paul: Prisoner and Letter Writer

A Puppet Drama Script Adapted from Acts 16: 11-40, Today’s English Version

As told by Luke in his letter to Theophilus from the Book of Acts 16: 11-40.

Characters

Luke

Paul

Silas

Lydia

Slave Girl

Jailer

Owner

Crowd

Official

Luke: On the Sabbath, we went out of Philippi to the riverside, where we thought there would be a place where Jews gathered for prayer. We sat down and talked to the women who gathered there.

Paul: Let us tell you about Jesus. When Jesus spoke, he spoke with God’s authority. When he acted, he acted with God’s power. He amazed the people. He was also gentle and loving. He cared for us in all our needs as a shepherd cares for the sheep.

Silas: After Jesus’ work was done, he returned to heaven to prepare a place for us and to rule with God in love. He will come again in glory. He remains with us now through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Luke: One of those who heard us was Lydia. She is a dealer in purple cloth. AND she is a woman who worships God. The Lord opened her mind to pay attention to what Paul was saying.

Paul: We are the church: the people who believe the good news about Jesus, who are baptized, and who share in the Lord’s Supper. Through these means of grace, the Spirit renews us so that we may serve God in love.

Lydia: I believe Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior. Please baptize me!

Paul: (Baptizing Lydia) Lydia, child of God, I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and

the Holy Ghost.

Luke: And so Lydia and all the people of her house were baptized in the name of Jesus that day.

Lydia: Come and stay in my house, if you have decided I am a true believer in the Lord. Please, I insist.

Luke: And so we stayed with Lydia while we were in Philippi.

One day as we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had an evil spirit. This spirit enabled her to predict the future.

Slave girl: I can see that God will save you.

Luke: By telling fortunes, this girl earned a lot of money for her owners.

Slave girl: Worship the Lord!

Owner: Okay. You got your fortune. Pay me now!

Luke: She followed Paul and the rest of us, all the time shouting!

Slave girl: These men are servants of the Most High God! They announce to you how you can be saved!

Luke: She followed us like this, shouting all the time, for many days.

Slave girl: These men are servants of the Most High God! They announce to you how you can be saved!

Luke: After a while, it got to be rather annoying.

Slave girl: These men are servants of the Most High God! They announce to you how you can be saved!

Luke: Paul finally got so upset by the yelling, he spoke to the evil spirit in the girl.

Paul: In the name of Jesus Christ, I order you to come out of her!!

Luke: The spirit immediately left the girl. Well, when her owners realized their chance of making any money with this slave girl was gone, they were furious!

Owner: Why did you do this? You have ruined a valuable piece of property! I demand you be punished.

Luke: They seized Paul and Silas and dragged them to the authorities, the Roman officials, in the

public square.

Owner: These men are Jews, and they are causing trouble in our city.

Official: What sort of trouble?

Owner: They are teaching customs that are against our law. We are Roman citizens. We cannot accept these customs or practice them.

Luke: The crowd joined the attack on Paul and Silas.

Crowd: Arrest them now!

Official: Tear off their clothes and whip them!

Luke: After this severe beating, Paul and Silas were thrown into jail.

Official: Jailer, lock them up. Be sure you do not lose these two.

Jailer: I will put them into the inner cell and fasten their feet with heavy blocks of wood. Then they won't go anywhere or bother anyone.

Luke: And so Paul and Silas were locked up. You know Paul and Silas. And as you can imagine, even before the jailer had finished turning the key in the lock, they were praying and singing. And the other prisoners were listening.

Paul: Praise the Lord!

Silas: Honor the Lord!

Paul and Silas: We love the Lord!

Luke: About midnight, there was a violent earthquake. (Noise) It shook the prison to its foundations. At once, all the doors opened. The chains fell off all the prisoners. The Jailer woke up and when he saw the prison doors opened, he thought that all the prisoners had escaped. He pulled out his sword and was about to kill himself.

Jailer: I'm in big trouble now. The prisoners are gone. I might as well kill myself and save myself from being tortured!

Paul: (loud) Don't kill yourself! We are all here!

Jailer: Praise God!

Luke: And the Jailer fell trembling at the feet of Paul and Silas.

Jailer: Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

Silas: Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and all your family.

Luke: Silas and Paul preached the word of the Lord to the jailer and to all the others in the house.

Paul: Praise the Lord!

Silas: Love the Lord!

Luke: At that very hour of the night the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. Then he and his family were baptized all at once.

Silas: Jailer, child of God, I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Luke: The jailer took Paul and Silas to his house and gave them some food to eat. He and his family were filled with joy because they now believed in God.

Jailer: Truly you are the disciples of the Lord!

Luke: The next day they heard from the Roman officials again.

Official: Let those men go.

Jailer: Paul and Silas, the officials have sent an order for you to be released. You may leave. And go in peace!

Paul: Thanks be the God!

Silas: Praise the Lord!

Luke: Paul and Silas left the prison and went to Lydia's house. There they met the believers and spoke words of encouragement to them.

Lydia: Oh, Paul and Silas, we are so glad to see you! We were so worried. We have been praying that God would be with you. Please tell us what happened.

Silas: While we were in prison, I remembered that I belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who died and rose again for my sake, so that nothing will ever separate me from God's love.

Luke: Paul and Silas then continued on their journey. They traveled to Thessalonica, where they continued to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Resources: the Presbyterian Church (USA) Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study (available from the Presbyterian Church (USA), 502-569-5191).

Reflection/Evaluation

How do we know learn the good news of Jesus? How does Kids' Kingdom help you learn more about the good news of Jesus?

Lord's Prayer

Activity

The following vocabulary will be helpful to go over before beginning the activity.

Pharisee – Jewish leaders who were very careful to follow all of God's laws and rules that they made up.

Gentile – someone who is not Jewish

Temple – the center of worship and religious life in Jerusalem

Synagogue – Jewish places of worship and study in cities and towns

Jerusalem – center of Jewish religious life

Damascus – one of the oldest cities in Paul's time, where he was going when he was blinded and heard Jesus speak

Tarsus – capital city of Cilicia, in modern day Turkey, where Saul was born

Persecution – causing other people to suffer because of what they believe

Paul: Prisoner and Letter Writer

A Puppet Drama Script Adapted from Acts 16: 11-40, Today's English Version

As told by Luke in his letter to Theophilus from the Book of Acts 16: 11-40.

Characters

Luke
Paul
Silas
Lydia
Slave Girl
Jailer
Owner
Crowd
Official

Luke: On the Sabbath, we went out of Philippi to the riverside, where we thought there would be a place where Jews gathered for prayer. We sat down and talked to the women who gathered there.

Paul: Let us tell you about Jesus. When Jesus spoke, he spoke with God's authority. When he acted, he acted with God's power. He amazed the people. He was also gentle and loving. He cared for us in all our needs as a shepherd cares for the sheep.

Silas: After Jesus' work was done, he returned to heaven to prepare a place for us and to rule with God in love. He will come again in glory. He remains with us now through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Luke: One of those who heard us was Lydia. She is a dealer in purple cloth. AND she is a woman who worships God. The Lord opened her mind to pay attention to what Paul was saying.

Paul: We are the church: the people who believe the good news about Jesus, who are baptized, and who share in the Lord's Supper. Through these means of grace, the Spirit renews us so that we may serve God in love.

Lydia: I believe Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior. Please baptize me!

Paul: (Baptizing Lydia) Lydia, child of God, I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Luke: And so Lydia and all the people of her house were baptized in the name of Jesus that day.

Lydia: Come and stay in my house, if you have decided I am a true believer in the Lord. Please, I insist.

Luke: And so we stayed with Lydia while we were in Philippi.

One day as we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had an evil spirit. This spirit enabled her to predict the future.

Slave girl: I can see that God will save you.

Luke: By telling fortunes, this girl earned a lot of money for her owners.

Slave girl: Worship the Lord!

Owner: Okay. You got your fortune. Pay me now!

Luke: She followed Paul and the rest of us, all the time shouting!

Slave girl: These men are servants of the Most High God! They announce to you how you can be saved!

Luke: She followed us like this, shouting all the time, for many days.

Slave girl: These men are servants of the Most High God! They announce to you how you can be saved!

Luke: After a while, it got to be rather annoying.

Slave girl: These men are servants of the Most High God! They announce to you how you can be saved!

Luke: Paul finally got so upset by the yelling, he spoke to the evil spirit in the girl.

Paul: In the name of Jesus Christ, I order you to come out of her!!

Luke: The spirit immediately left the girl. Well, when her owners realized their chance of making any money with this slave girl was gone, they were furious!

Owner: Why did you do this? You have ruined a valuable piece of property! I demand you be punished.

Luke: They seized Paul and Silas and dragged them to the authorities, the Roman officials, in the

public square.

Owner: These men are Jews, and they are causing trouble in our city.

Official: What sort of trouble?

Owner: They are teaching customs that are against our law. We are Roman citizens. We cannot accept these customs or practice them.

Luke: The crowd joined the attack on Paul and Silas.

Crowd: Arrest them now!

Official: Tear off their clothes and whip them!

Luke: After this severe beating, Paul and Silas were thrown into jail.

Official: Jailer, lock them up. Be sure you do not lose these two.

Jailer: I will put them into the inner cell and fasten their feet with heavy blocks of wood. Then they won't go anywhere or bother anyone.

Luke: And so Paul and Silas were locked up. You know Paul and Silas. And as you can imagine, even before the jailer had finished turning the key in the lock, they were praying and singing. And the other prisoners were listening.

Paul: Praise the Lord!

Silas: Honor the Lord!

Paul and Silas: We love the Lord!

Luke: About midnight, there was a violent earthquake. (Noise) It shook the prison to its foundations. At once, all the doors opened. The chains fell off all the prisoners. The Jailer woke up and when he saw the prison doors opened, he thought that all the prisoners had escaped. He pulled out his sword and was about to kill himself.

Jailer: I'm in big trouble now. The prisoners are gone. I might as well kill myself and save myself from being tortured!

Paul: (loud) Don't kill yourself! We are all here!

Jailer: Praise God!

Luke: And the Jailer fell trembling at the feet of Paul and Silas.

Jailer: Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

Silas: Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and all your family.

Luke: Silas and Paul preached the word of the Lord to the jailer and to all the others in the house.

Paul: Praise the Lord!

Silas: Love the Lord!

Luke: At that very hour of the night the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. Then he and his family were baptized all at once.

Silas: Jailer, child of God, I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Luke: The jailer took Paul and Silas to his house and gave them some food to eat. He and his family were filled with joy because they now believed in God.

Jailer: Truly you are the disciples of the Lord!

Luke: The next day they heard from the Roman officials again.

Official: Let those men go.

Jailer: Paul and Silas, the officials have sent an order for you to be released. You may leave. And go in peace!

Paul: Thanks be the God!

Silas: Praise the Lord!

Luke: Paul and Silas left the prison and went to Lydia's house. There they met the believers and spoke words of encouragement to them.

Lydia: Oh, Paul and Silas, we are so glad to see you! We were so worried. We have been praying that God would be with you. Please tell us what happened.

Silas: While we were in prison, I remembered that I belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who died and rose again for my sake, so that nothing will ever separate me from God's love.

Luke: Paul and Silas then continued on their journey. They traveled to Thessalonica, where they continued to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Resources: the Presbyterian Church (USA) Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study (available from the Presbyterian Church (USA), 502-569-5191).

Reflection/Evaluation

Students are to copy the memory verse into their journals. Students are to write an answer to the following questions. If they are unable to write an answer they may illustrate one.

How do we know learn the good news of Jesus? How does Kids' Kingdom help you learn more about the good news of Jesus?

Closing Prayer



Luke



PPP
Paul



Owner



Silas



Lydia



Jailer



Official



Slave Girl