

The Philippian Jailer

Bible Lesson: Acts 16:16-34; Philippians 1:13-14

PREPARATION

Objective

Students will recognize how God moved through history, in spite of obstacles.

Outcomes

1. Students will discover that Christians often face opposition as they partner with God to make his name known.
2. Students will describe how God advanced his purposes through Paul and Silas in Philippi.

Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 15:58 “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

Directions

1. Review verses for the “Bible Drill Challenge.” Consider how you will relate each to today’s theme.
2. Review the “Key Word Wheel” poster. Integrate these words as you notice them in any and all sections of today’s lesson. Suggested: “Purpose,” “Power,” “People,” and “Passport to the World.”
3. Read the Bible story references. Pray that God will guide you as you teach and apply this lesson to your unique group of students. Locate cities in the story on a Bible map of Paul’s journeys.
4. Prepare paper triangles for the Pre-Lesson Activity. Cut the colored paper into strips, two inches wide. Cut these strips into two-inch squares. Cut the squares in half, corner to corner, making triangles. You will need to make ten triangles for each student. Make sure you have all three colors of triangles in each envelope. Place these in separate envelopes.



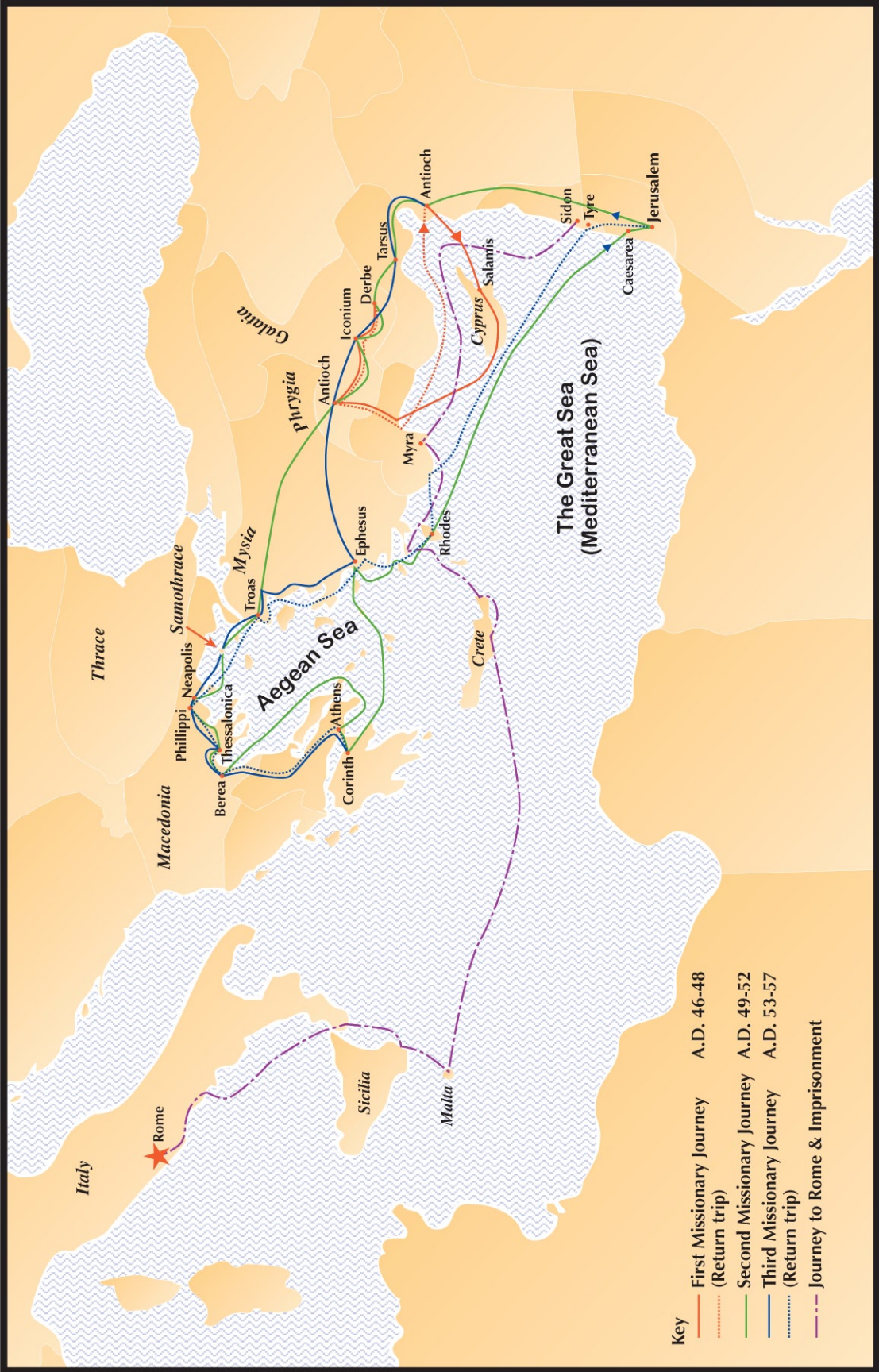
PREPARATION: 25 min.

TEACHING: 35 min.

Materials

- Bibles
- “Key Word Wheel” poster (Introduction p. 6)
- “Key Word Cards” (Introduction pp. 7-8)
- “Paul’s Missionary Journeys” map (p. 2)
- construction or copier paper in three bold colors (three sheets for every twelve students)
- envelope for each student
- scissors or paper cutter
- ruler (optional)

Paul's Missionary Journeys



TEACHING (CORE)

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY: THE COMMUNICATIONS GAME

Directions

1. Warmly welcome students to your time of better understanding God's purpose on earth.
2. Instruct students to find a partner and sit back-to-back on the floor.
3. Give each student an envelope with an assortment of ten triangles.
4. Instruct one student in each pair to open his or her envelope and create any kind of pattern desired on the floor. His or her partner should not peek.
5. When finished, the student should tell his partner that he is done. At this point, the second student may remove the triangles from his envelope and wait for directions.
6. The first student will describe his or her creation. As the description is given, the partner should try to duplicate the creation by following his or her partner's instructions exactly without asking questions, peeking, or speaking.
7. When finished, invite partners to compare designs. Ask, "*Were your creations similar? How were they different?*" Listen for student responses. Then ask, "*Was there any confusion or miscommunication?*"
8. If there is time, exchange roles.
9. When the activity is finished say, "*In the same way, when missionaries work with people of different languages and cultures, there are many things that are difficult to communicate.*" Ask, "*How easy would it be to share about Jesus with someone that had never heard about God, the Bible, or anything Christian at all? Then think about communicating this message in a different language!*"

BIBLE DRILL CHALLENGE

1 Corinthians 15:58 "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

Directions

1. Give each student a Bible. Invite students to participate in a Bible drill. Say, "*Since the Bible has such an important purpose, we want to get more acquainted with the Bible itself. Today, and over the next several weeks, we will practice finding verses and stories in the Bible that help us understand God's purpose.*" (Optional: "*We will also be practicing to challenge our parents to a 'Bible Drill Challenge' on the last week of our quarter.*")
2. Instruct students to hold their Bibles in a ready position, Bibles closed and over their heads. Invite students to work in pairs if they are less familiar with their Bibles. Let students warm up for a speed competition by first looking for each item below, one at a time. As you name the item, adding theme-related questions or comments, students will lower their

Materials

- an envelope filled with ten triangles for each student

Materials

- Bibles

Bibles and quickly try to find what you have named. Say, “Ready, begin” after introducing each item.

- 1 John 4:9 – “*How did Jesus show us God’s love?*” (review verse from Lesson 5)
 - Acts 1:8 – “*What (Who) did God promise to give to help believers communicate the truth about Jesus for people of all nations to understand?*” (Holy Spirit)
 - Galatians 3:29 – “*Who are Abraham’s children?*” (all followers of Jesus)
 - Matthew 28:19 – “*What is the name for this command?*” (The Great Commission)
 - Mark 16:15 – “*Where are believers to preach the good news?*” (all over the world)
 - 1 Corinthians 15:58 – “*Today’s verse tells how we should serve God.*”
3. After reading the final verse aloud, discuss its meaning together. Explain that throughout history, believers have been obeying Jesus’ command to help others know God. This verse is an encouragement for them to be strong.
 4. Teach that God’s words to all those who are working for him is that they should know their work is not wasted. God will reward them. And their work will accomplish something, even if it seems difficult at the moment.
 5. Ask, “*What are some difficulties people might experience when working around the world to share the gospel?*” (might get tired, might be persecuted or ridiculed, might get sick, might feel alone)
 6. Say, “*Paul and Silas experienced some of these difficulties in our Bible story today.*”

BIBLE LESSON: THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER

Directions

1. Together, review the story of Saul, his conversion, and his desire to share the truth about God and Jesus Christ to people of all nations. He was one of the first missionaries. Ask, “*How many major missionary journeys did he take?*” (three)
2. Turn to Romans 15. Explain that this is a letter Paul wrote to believers in Rome. Read verses 17-21 together. Ask, “*What did Paul describe as his work?*” (leading Gentiles to obey God, preaching where God was not known) Teach that Paul was a Jew, a descendant of Abraham. The Bible word for all people who are not Jews, is “Gentiles.” They were outsiders, according to some, but not to God, and not to Paul.
3. Say, “*This kind of thinking led Paul and Silas to visit Philippi.*” Find Philippi on a Bible map. Explain that it was new territory for Christianity.
4. Say, “*While there, Paul and Silas met a girl who could predict the future. The spirit in her that enabled her to do this was from Satan, not from God. When she followed Paul and Silas, harassing them, Paul prayed in the name*

Materials

- Bible
- “Paul’s Missionary Journeys” map (p. 2)
- “Key Word Wheel” poster (Introduction p. 6)
- “Key Word Cards” (Introduction pp. 7-8)

of Jesus that she would be freed. The evil spirit left her. This was wonderful news for the girl. But her owners, who made money from people who paid to hear her predictions, were angry. They had Paul and Silas arrested. They were beaten, thrown into jail, and chained in a dark dungeon.”

5. Continue, “Paul and Silas knew God and trusted him. They knew he was worthy of praise, no matter what was happening to them. So they prayed and sang songs of praise late into the night.”
6. “God caused a violent earthquake that shook the prison, opened all the cell doors, and set the prisoners free from the chains. The jailer woke up and became terrified. He would lose his job, and possibly his life, if any of the prisoners escaped. But Paul told him that everyone was still there.”
7. Say, “The jailer fell to his knees and asked how he might be saved.” Read Acts 16:31-34. “At least one family in Philippi (a non-Jewish city) came to know Jesus.”
8. Position the “Key Word Wheel” poster where students can see it. Ask, “Which ‘Key Words’ do you see displayed in this story?” (“Power,” “People,” “Proclamation,” “People Moving,” “Passport to the World,” “Purpose,” “Preparation”)
9. Ask, “What difficulties did Paul and Silas experience as they brought the gospel to Philippi?” (anger, arrest, beating, jail) “How did God use these difficulties to advance his purpose?” (The prisoners heard about God as Paul and Silas sang and prayed. The jailer and his family came to know and worship Jesus.)

IN CLOSING: PRAYER

Directions

1. Say, “Paul and Silas chose missionary work that was difficult. They were always going to places where the people had never heard the gospel. They were often opposed by those who did not believe their message.”
2. “Think back in the story. What were Paul and Silas doing right before God showed his power through the earthquake?” (praying and singing praise to God)
3. Stress to the students how important prayer is in missions work. Lead them in praying for missionaries they are familiar with who work in difficult places.



PRAYER ACTIVITY: ILLEGAL GOSPEL

Before the Activity Directions

1. Arrange for use of a portion of the church or a whole building for a “hide and seek” type game. It is most exciting played in darkness or dim light.

Directions

1. Begin by saying that in some places in the world, life for Christians is very dangerous. What does the Bible say about persecution? Does God promise Christians safety?
2. Play Infobyte #6, “Illegal Gospel.” Discuss what God really promises Christians.
3. Invite your students to help you find some of these Communist and former Communist countries on the globe: North Korea, China, Cuba, and former Soviet countries. Say, *“Since a Communist government is atheist (does not believe in God), it normally forbids Christianity.”*
4. Select a few students from the group to be Communists. The rest are church-goers.
5. Show students the flashlight and say, *“This flashlight represents the church, a light that must shine for God.”*
6. Say, *“All the church-goers will go outside of the building (or section of the building) and all the doors will be closed. While you are outside, a teacher will hide the flashlight inside a room in the playing area.”* Designate the boundaries of the play area.
7. *“When the teacher opens the doors, the church-goers come in, search in the rooms for the flashlight, and hide somewhere near it. The Communists will be looking for you. You may hide from the Communists in any room, but your goal is to find the light. If you find the light, you may leave the room and lead others to the church. You do this at the risk of being caught in the hallways.”*
8. Speak to the Communists. *“You will patrol the halls, but may not go into any rooms. If you tag any church-goers in the halls, you may lead them outside.”*
9. The game is over when all the church-goers have reached and gathered near the light (or after about 15 minutes).
10. Gather all students back together. Spend time praying for Christians who live in countries with Communist governments.



PREPARATION: 20 min.

TEACHING: 30 min.

Materials

- Infobyte #6, “Illegal Gospel” (IB)
- TV/DVD player
- globe
- flashlight