

Paul's Faith Story

Bible Lesson: Acts 9:1-31

PREPARATION

Objective

Students will understand that they are to share God's story with the people around them.

Outcomes

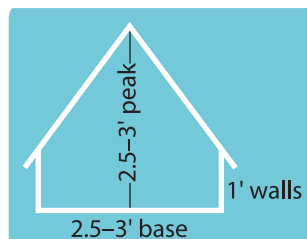
1. Students will learn what the word "witness" means.
2. Students will gain an appreciation for how Jesus can change people through the concrete example of Paul.
3. Students will understand that they, like Paul, can love Jesus and learn to tell others about him.

Memory Verse

Acts 1:8b "... you will be my witnesses from one end of the earth to the other." (NIRV)

Directions

1. Review the words and hand motions for the song, "You Will Be My Witnesses" and the "I Can, Too!" finger play.
2. Place your flashlight near the place you will stand when teaching.
3. Use masking tape to divide your area into two sections. One side represents the city of Jerusalem. The other side represents the city of Damascus.
4. Use masking tape to section off a rectangular area on the Jerusalem side for a jail. This area should be large enough to accommodate three people.
5. Use masking tape to outline the shape of small houses on both sides of the dividing line. Make enough houses to seat all your students, three to four per house. The houses will represent Christian fellowships that met together in homes in New Testament times. See the diagram below for house measurements.



PREPARATION: 25 min.

TEACHING: 40 min.

Materials

- Bible
- "You Will Be My Witnesses" song (MS)
- "I Can, Too!" finger play (AS)
- very bright flashlight
- three pieces of 8 ½ x 11-inch white paper
- several roles of masking tape
- TV/DVD
- at least two helpers

TEACHING (CORE)

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY: WHAT IS A WITNESS?

Directions

1. Explain the term “witnesses” using the following illustration. Have students stand and then divide the group in half. Turn to one group and say, *“Please turn around so I see your backs.”* Wait for students to follow directions. Then say, *“Good, I see your backs. Now cover your eyes and do not peek until I tell you.”*
2. Tell the other group of students to watch you. Put your finger over your mouth to signal quiet. Pick up your flashlight, hold it up high, and then hide it behind your back.
3. Tell the students who are hiding their eyes to uncover their eyes and turn back around to face you. Say, *“Some of you saw, or witnessed, what I did. You are witnesses. Let’s say that word together.”* Wait until students repeat the word “witnesses.” *“You can explain what happened. Others of you did not see, and need a witness to tell you what happened.”*
4. Say, *“Raise your hand if you saw what I did, and repeat after me: We are witnesses! (pause) We know what happened. (pause) We can explain it to others.”*
5. Choose one or two witnesses to explain what happened to the group that did not see.
6. Reverse roles. Ask the first group of “witnesses” to turn their backs and cover their eyes to keep from peeking. Those who originally had their backs turned will now witness your actions.
7. Tell the other group of students to watch you. Put your finger over your mouth to signal quiet. Bring the flashlight from behind your back with one hand. Take it with the other hand, pass it around in front of you, and then swiftly hide it behind your back again.
8. Tell the students who are hiding their eyes to uncover their eyes and turn back around to face you. Say, *“Some of you saw what I did. Raise your hand if you are witnesses.”* Allow students to respond. *“Repeat after me: We are witnesses! (pause) We know what happened. (pause) We can explain it to others.”*
9. Turn to the other groups and say, *“Your group did not see what I did this time. You need a witness to tell you.”* Choose one or two witnesses to explain what happened.

MEMORY VERSE SONG: YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES

Acts 1:8b “... you will be my witnesses from one end of the earth to the other.” (NIRV)

Directions

1. Have students spread out far enough so that their outstretched arms will not bump into each other.
2. Say, *“Today’s memory verse talks about witnesses. We learned that Jesus died on the cross, and then came back to life again. But did you know that*

Materials

- very bright flashlight

Materials

- Bible
- “You Will Be My Witnesses” song (MS)
- TV/DVD

the Bible says that after Jesus rose from the dead, he spent forty days on earth before going to heaven?”

3. *“During these forty days, Jesus spent time with many people, proving that he had come back to life after he died on the cross. He also taught his followers more about God’s purpose – making himself known to people all around the world. Today’s memory verse contains some of the very important last words Jesus said before he returned to heaven.”*
4. Open your Bible and read Acts 1:8b, “... you will be my witnesses from one end of the earth to the other.” Ask, “What had Jesus’ followers seen Jesus do that they needed to share with others?” Allow responses. (treat people with kindness, heal sick people, do miracles, die on the cross, come back to life, etc.)
5. Explain, “Because Jesus’ followers were witnesses, we have the part of God’s story about Jesus in our Bible today. How did that happen? Through the years, Jesus’ followers passed on what they knew about God by writing it down and telling others. They told people who lived close to them. They also traveled to tell people in other areas about Jesus. Some of those people became witnesses, passing on what they knew about God – all the way down to us today.”
6. Play the memory verse song on the DVD and have students watch.
7. Sing the song through, adding motions.
8. Ask, “What would happen if people who follow Jesus stopped being witnesses?” Allow students to make predictions.

BIBLE LESSON: PAUL’S FAITH STORY

Directions

1. Have helpers assist students to sit down cross-legged, three or four per house, inside the masking tape outlines on the floor. Two can easily sit side-by-side in the bottom portion of the house, with the third sitting behind and between the other two, in the peaked portion. Ask them to turn their bodies so they face you.
2. Ask, “Have you ever known a very mean and angry person, someone so mean that you felt afraid of him or her?” Allow time for responses, but do not linger here.
3. Open your Bible to Acts 8.
4. Choose one of your adult helpers to play the part of Saul/Paul. Call this person up to where you stand. Ask, “Can you look mean and angry?”
5. Choose two other students to come up front to play the part of Saul/Paul’s helpers. Ask, “Can you look angry, too? You will follow Saul around, but you do not do anything until you hear your part in the story.”
6. Gesture toward the seated students and say, “You are acting out the part of some of the first Christians, way back in Bible times. You believe that Jesus is the Son of God. You believe that Jesus, God’s Son, died on the cross to take the punishment for your sins, and that he rose from the dead, as promised. You are believers who have moved away from Jerusalem.”

Materials

- Bible
- very bright flashlight
- three pieces of 8 ½ x 11-inch white paper
- homes outlined on the floor with masking tape
- at least two helpers

7. Position yourself on one side of the dividing line and motion to half the students nearest to you. Say, *"You live in the city of Damascus."*
8. Step on the other side of the dividing line and motion to those students. Say, *"You live in the city of Jerusalem."*
9. Motion to all the seated students and say, *"Some of you are just friends. Some of you are families. You meet in homes to eat together, pray together, and encourage each other."*
10. Have students do the following motions with you several times, reminding them what the actions mean:
 - Fold your hands and bow your head to pray. Say, *"Christians prayed together."*
 - Pretend to scoop food from a plate into your mouth. Say, *"Christians ate together."*
 - Pat each other gently on the back, as if encouraging someone. Say, *"Christians encouraged each other, especially when bad things happened."*
11. Say, *"Now fold your hands in prayer and lay them in your lap." Demonstrate. "If something in the story upsets you, hold your hands up in the prayer position, like this, as if praying to God."*
12. Walk back over to Paul and his helpers and say, *"We first meet Saul, he is watching a crowd of angry men kill a follower of Jesus named Stephen. Saul is watching their coats as they throw rocks at Stephen. What do you think of that?"* Allow responses.
13. Say, *"Let's read what the Bible says that Paul did next."*
14. Read Acts 8:3, point to houses in Jerusalem and jail area and say, *"OK, Saul, go from house to house in Jerusalem, and drag a man away to jail. Of course, you will do it much more gently than Saul did. Believers, you do not resist. Go along peacefully."*
15. After the first Christian is dragged off to jail, ask, *"What would it be like to have someone barge into your home and drag your mom, or dad, or friend off to prison, just for believing in Jesus?"* Allow time for responses. Affirm that some would cry and be very sad while they prayed. Encourage students to act out those feelings, too.
16. Allow Saul/Paul to put two more people in on the Jerusalem side in jail.
17. Call Saul/Paul up to you and hand him pieces of paper, to represent letters. Read Acts 9:1-2. Say, *"Now you have letters from important people that allow you to take believers in Jesus to prison. You want to go other cities to put these people in jail. You and you helpers start off toward the city of Damascus, but go slowly. Do not arrive until you hear what happens next!"*
18. Read Acts 9:3-8, shining your bright flashlight all around Saul. Encourage Saul and the helpers with him to act out their parts. Turn off your flashlight.
19. Have Paul and his helpers sit down by you and say, *"You are no longer Saul. You were given the name Paul by Jesus and now here you are in the*

city of Damascus. You have arrived, but you are in pretty bad shape. You are completely blind. Jesus must be a very powerful!”

20. Walk near one of the houses and choose a seated student to play the part of Ananias. Read Acts 9:10 and ask the group, “*Imagine what it would be like to hear God’s voice speak to you? Wow!*” Allow responses.
21. Say, “*Ananias started out well, didn’t he? ‘Yes, Lord,’ is a good way to answer, when God talks to you. But what if God tells you to do something that is hard or scary?*” Allow responses.
22. Read Acts 9:11-14 and ask the seated students, “*So, even though God told Ananias that Paul was praying and that God had sent Paul a message that Ananias coming to visit, Ananias was afraid. Paul had hurt and killed a lot of Christians when he was Saul and Ananias may have thought that Paul was going to hurt him. Do you think Ananias will obey God?*” Allow responses.
23. Read Acts 9:15-19, encouraging Ananias and Paul to act out what happens.
24. Say, “*After Paul believed in Jesus, he spent several days with the Christians in Damascus. He ate with them, he probably prayed with them, and he got to know the Christians there.*” Have Paul go and sit with the students in one of the houses in Damacus. Then say, “*Let’s all do those motions again.*” Lead all students to do the earlier motions for pray, eat, and encourage.
25. Ask, “*When Paul got his strength back, do you think he was mean and angry like he had been before he met Jesus?*” Allow responses.
26. Say, “*The Bible says that Paul went to the places where people worshiped to tell other people that Jesus was the Son of God.*” Encourage Paul to get up and go around Damascus, as if preaching.
27. Ask, “*How can you tell that meeting Jesus changed Paul?*” Allow students to give examples from the story.
28. Confirm that Paul was different. “*Jesus changed Saul to Paul. Now Paul wanted to tell everyone about the change! Instead of hating Jesus, he loved Jesus. Instead of hating Christians, he loved Christians. Instead of traveling to new places to put Christians in jail, Paul traveled to tell people about Jesus. The men who did not love Jesus started trying to hurt Paul, just like Paul had been hurting Christians earlier. Now Paul was the one who got thrown in jail sometimes!*”
29. Ask, “*Would you stop telling people about Jesus if mean and angry men came after you? Do you think Paul gave up?*” Allow responses. “*No, Paul did not give up. He continued to be a witness for Jesus for the rest of his life.*”

IN CLOSING: REVIEW AND APPLICATION

Directions

1. Have students stand up and spread out. Say, “*Can you be a witness for Jesus, just like Paul? Can you be a witness, even if you are not very old or very big?*” Allow responses. Affirm that children can be witnesses for

Materials

- “I Can, Too” finger play (AS)
- TV/DVD

Jesus. Remind students that they can use their “God’s Story Cards” to tell people the story of the Bible.

2. Play “I Can, Too!” through once and have the students watch to review the motions.
3. Then have students do the finger play.



VIDEO: MALAY KIDS

Before the Activity Directions

1. Preview “Malay Kids” on the DVD.

Directions

1. Hold up the globe and say, “*The Malay (mah-lay) live in several different countries in Southeast Asia.*” Show the students the countries of Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, and *Brunei* (broo-nye) on the island of Borneo.
2. “*Let’s watch this video to find out more about Malay families.*”
3. Show the video.
4. Ask, “*How are Malay children different from you?*” Allow responses.
5. Ask, “*How are Malay children the same as you?*”
6. Conclude by saying, “*God loves Malay families and wants them to know and worship him.*”



PREPARATION: 11 min.

TEACHING: 15 min.

Materials

- “Malay Kids” (VF)
- TV/DVD
- globe



CRAFT: BEAUTIFUL BATIK

Directions

1. Say, *"We are learning about the Malay people. They are famous for a special craft called batik (bah-teeck)." Ask, "Have you ever used paint to make something?" Allow students to share projects they have made using paint.*
2. Say, *"In batik, designers dip their brushes into a liquid wax instead of paint. They use their brushes to paint beautiful patterns on a piece of cloth. The wax is clear and does not add any color to the cloth. You might have used a wax crayon to make a design on a hard boiled egg at Easter time."*
3. *"Next the cloth with the wax design is placed in bright colored dye and hung up to dry. This is similar to dipping your white Easter egg into a cup of colored dye or food coloring until it changes color."*
4. *"When you take the Easter egg out of the dye, what happens to the parts you colored with a crayon?" Let students respond that those spots stay white.*
5. Say, *"It is the same with batik. Once the cloth dries, the artist removes the wax from the cloth. Most of the cloth is the color of the dye, but in the places where the wax was, there is a white design."*
6. *"The Malay use this colorful material to make clothes, tablecloths, napkins, and sheets."*
7. Pass out crayons and one sheet of white construction paper to each student. Tell them that they will do a batik project on paper instead of on cloth.
8. Instruct students to draw large simple designs or geometric shapes on their paper, using one or two different colors. (Sample designs at end of craft directions, p. 8.)
9. Tell the students to color in a few places in the designs, using pressure to build up the wax.
10. Place a few sheets of newspaper under each piece of white paper.
11. Pass out the watercolors, paint brushes, and rinse water. Tell students they will now do the step that is similar to dyeing the cloth bright colors in batik.
12. Demonstrate how to brush a dark color of paint over the entire sheet of white paper. Older students may wish to use two different colors of paint. Remind them to rinse out their brushes before trying a new color.
13. Have paper towels ready to be used as needed.
14. Point out to the students how the wax from the crayons shows through the watercolors.
15. Allow sufficient time for the paper to dry.

Optional batik placemat

1. Place one self-laminating sheet sticky side up onto a table and center the dry batik page on this sheet.



PREPARATION: 20 min.

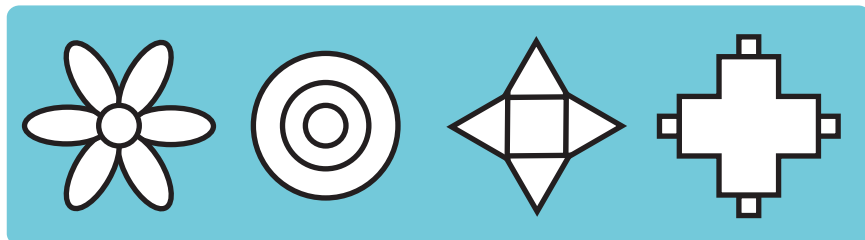
TEACHING: 30 min.

Materials

- one piece white, 8 ½ x 11-inch construction paper for each student
- crayons in a variety of colors
- watercolor kits containing six to eight colors
- one paint brush for each student
- cups half-filled with water
- newspapers
- paper towels
- two do-it-yourself laminating sheets for each student (if making optional batik placemat)

2. Place a second self-laminating sheet on top of the *batik* page, sticky side down.
3. Press down carefully and slowly.

Sample Designs





GAME: SEPAK TAKRAW

(say-**pahk** tahk-**rah**), a Malay ball game

Before the Activity Directions

1. Blow up and tie the balloons.

Directions

1. Tell the students that Malay children enjoy playing sports and games. Say, *“Listen to this list of Malay games. Clap once when you hear an activity you have tried.”*
2. Read the following list of favorite Malay sports, pausing in between each one for students to clap once. Say, *“Soccer, basketball, field hockey, hopscotch, kite flying, spinning a top, and playing the board game Mancala.”*
3. Show students the illustration of the rattan ball or a real rattan ball. Say, *“Malay children love to play a game with a ball like this. It is called Sepak Takraw (say-**pahk** tahk-**rah**).”* Let students repeat this Malay word.
4. Say, *“There are two ways to play the traditional Malay game. When played with two teams, it looks like volleyball. Players stand on either side of a net. They move a light-weight woven ball made of rattan (rah-**tan**) over the net using their heads, feet, knees, or shoulders. They may not touch the ball with their arms or hands.”*
5. *“Sometimes Sepak Takraw is played in a circle without teams. The boys and girls in the circle work together to keep the ball in the air for as long as possible, without using their hands.”*
6. Tell students they will be playing the circle game. For their game, they will use balloons instead of a ball.
7. Divide the students into groups of 4-6 and have them form small circles.
8. Give each group a balloon. Tell them they need to practice passing the balloon to each other without allowing it to touch the ground.
9. Have the students touch their heads, feet, knees, shoulders and tell them that these are the only body parts that they can use to hit the balloon.
10. Have them hold up their hands and tell them that these are the parts of their body they may not use.
11. Allow the students to practice volleying the balloon. Have them start in a small circle, close together.
12. After a few minutes, direct groups to make their circles larger by stepping back a few steps.
13. Have a contest to see which group can keep the balloon in the air the longest. Explain, *“When I say ‘go,’ your group needs to begin hitting the balloon to keep it in the air. When your balloon hits the floor, your group needs to sit down and watch the children in the other groups. The last group to sit down is the winner.”*



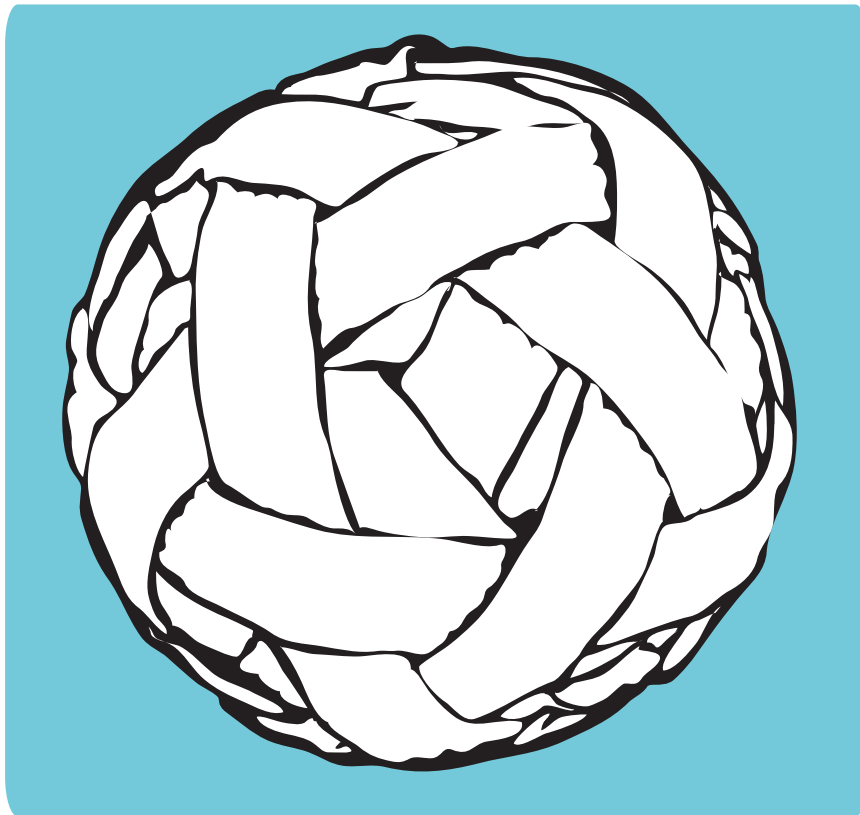
PREPARATION: 10 min.

TEACHING: 15 min.

Materials

- small *rattan* (rah-**tan**) ball – available at international stores such as World Market or Pier One – or a copy of the illustration (p. 11)
- one medium-sized balloon for every six students

14. Demonstrate with one group and answer any questions to clarify the rules.
15. Then play as many rounds as time permits.





SNACK: PISANG GORENG

(pee-sahng gohr-ehng, fried bananas), a Malay snack
Makes 10 servings (one serving = one half banana)

Before the Activity Directions

1. Peel bananas, slice them lengthwise, and then in half crosswise.
2. Heat butter in the skillet until it is bubbling.
3. Place bananas in the skillet in a single layer, cut side down. You may need to fry more than one batch.
4. Saute bananas until golden, turning once (about two minutes on each side).
5. Drain bananas on paper towels.
6. Sprinkle bananas with cinnamon and sugar and serve warm, if possible.

Directions

1. Say, “*We have been learning about the Malay people.*” To show where most Malay families live, point to the countries of Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Brunei on the island of Borneo on the map or globe.
2. Ask, “*Have you ever shopped for food at an outdoor stand or market?*” Allow brief responses. “*Families in Malaysia and Indonesia shop at outdoor markets all the time. They buy meats, vegetables, drinks, and fruits. Tropical fruits such as coconuts, papaya, mangoes, and bananas are piled up for sale. If you go to the person selling drinks, he might make you some fresh juice by blending some of the fruits at the market.*”
3. Say, “*A popular treat in Malay families comes from bananas. What desserts or snacks have you had that are made from bananas?*” Allow responses.
4. “*The Malay treat is called Pisang Goreng (pee-sahng gohr-ehng) or fried bananas.*” Allow students to say the Malay words after you.
5. Pass out paper plates. Use serving spoon to give each student half a banana.
6. Before eating, pray for the Malay people to come to know Jesus.



PREPARATION: 25 min.

TEACHING: 10 min.

Materials

- five firm bananas
- 5 tablespoons butter or margarine
- cinnamon
- sugar
- knife
- large skillet
- spatula or turner
- platter or plate
- paper towels
- serving spoon
- small paper plates
- world map or globe



PRAYER ACTIVITY: GROWING GODLY HEARTS

Before the Activity Directions

1. Copy the “Malay Prayer Requests” and cut the strips on the lines.
2. Using the black marker, label each 3 x 5-inch card 1, 2, 3, or 4. Tape a card to the side of each flower pot.
3. Using the numbers on the prayer request strips, sort them into the appropriate flower pots. You may wish to fold the requests in half before placing them in the pots.

Directions

1. *“The Malay who live in Malaysia have a nickname – sons of the soil. This means they lived in their country first, before the Chinese or Indians or other people who came from Europe. Who were the first people to live in your country, the natives?”* Allow responses. In the United States, students will say the Native American tribes. In Australia, the natives would be the aborigines. *“Sons of the soil also means that, in the past, many Malay worked as farmers, growing crops in the soil. Even today, most of the farms in Malaysia are run by Malay families.”*
2. Say, *“Although the Malay lived in Malaysia before their Indian or the Chinese neighbors, they were not the first to believe in Jesus. Many Indian and Chinese Christians live in Malaysia, but almost all Malay families are Muslims, people who follow the religion of Islam. They do not understand that Jesus died for their sins, and they try to get to heaven by doing good things.”*
3. Show the four flower pots to the students and read the label on each pot. Say, *“These flower pots remind us of the sons of the soil, the Malay people. Each pot holds three prayer requests. We will be praying for God to change the hearts of the Malay so that they can grow to be the people that he created them to be.”*
4. Choose a student to roll the dice. If he rolls a number between 1 and 4, he should take a prayer request from the pot with the matching number and read it to the class. The student may pray or choose another volunteer to pray for the request he just read.
5. For younger children, have an adult helper read the request strip they choose. Let the student pray a simple prayer.
6. After a prayer request strip has been read, place it outside the pot on the table or floor.
7. When a student rolls a 5 or 6, he may choose a request from any flower pot.
8. If a student rolls a number and the matching flower pot is empty, he loses his turn.
9. Continue until all the prayer request strips have been used.



PREPARATION: 10 min.

TEACHING: 20 min.

Materials

- “Malay Prayer Requests” (pp. 14-15)
- scissors
- four small flower pots
- four white 3 x 5-inch cards
- black marker
- clear tape
- game dice

Malay Prayer Requests

1

Dear God, thank you that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. Please help the Malay to understand that you chose Jesus, your Son, to be the way to God for all peoples. Amen.

1

Dear God, the Malay think that being Muslim is part of them that cannot change, like their eye color or how tall they are. Help them to understand that they can believe in Jesus and still be Malay.

1

Dear God, the Malay try to do good things, but they are not sure that they will go to heaven. Please let them know that if they believe in Jesus as their Savior, they can be sure they will go to heaven. Amen.

2

Dear God, family life is very important to the Malay. We pray that the grandfather, father, or uncle who leads each Malay family will come to know you as their Savior so the whole family will also become believers in you. Amen.

2

Dear God, in some countries, it is against the law to tell Malay people about Jesus. Please change the hearts of the leaders who make these rules so that Malay families can hear about you. Amen.

2

Dear God, when the Malay become Christians, they are treated very badly by their Muslim family and neighbors. Help them to trust in you to protect them and make them brave enough to share Jesus with other Malay. Amen.

Malay Prayer Requests, continued

3

Dear God, please help Malay families to pray to you when they are sick, afraid, or needing help. Help them to know that you are more powerful than the charms, medicines, and spells they buy to make them well or protect them from evil. Amen.

3

Dear God, the Malay try to please you by following the rules of their religion. Help them know that they cannot get rid of sin by following rules. Help the Malay to trust in Jesus to take away the sin in their heart. Amen.

3

Dear God, some Malay students go to other countries for college. Please help these students to learn about Jesus and then take what they learn back home to their families. Amen.

4

Dear God, please send Christians who can teach English or do other jobs to live and work in areas where the Malay live. Please help them to tell the Malay in their classes or at their jobs about you so they can know you personally. Amen.

4

Dear God, there are already Chinese and Indian Christian churches in some towns and cities where the Malay live. Help these Christians to tell their Malay neighbors about you. Amen.

4

Dear God, please help Christians around the world to love the Malay like you do. Help them to pray for the Malay and work together to send more Christians to countries where the Malay live. Amen.
