



# Paul's Third Journey

**Lesson Aim:** To know we are called to encourage the church.

## THE WORSHIP

**Who God Is:** The Spirit Who Connects Us

## THE WORD

**What He Has Done:** God sent Paul to encourage the churches he started or visited on previous journeys.

**Scripture Focus:** Acts 18:23-24; 20:22-24, 36-38 **Key Verse:** Acts 18:23-24

**Christ Connection:** Isaiah 43:5-7

## THE WAY

**The Big Question:** What truth encourages you most?

## UNIT 4 FOCUS VERSE

"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

Unit 4: The Promise of Connection			
	Bible Story	What He Has Done	Lesson Aim
17	Paul's Third Journey, Acts 18:23-24; 20:22-24, 36-38	God sent Paul to encourage the churches he started or visited on previous journeys.	To know we are called to encourage the church.
18	Paul Is Arrested in Jerusalem, Acts 21:33-36, 39-40; 22:1-8, 21-22; 23:11	God gave Paul boldness to tell his story to the people of Jerusalem.	To know God gives us courage to share our own stories about Him.
19	Paul and King Agrippa, Acts 26:19-32	God made Paul bold to speak about Jesus to King Agrippa.	To know we can share our faith and pray, trusting God with the outcome. (Salvation Message)
20	Paul and the Shipwreck, Acts 27:13-44; Romans 5:1-5	God saved everyone on the ship as He promised.	To understand that hardships strengthen our faith and are part of God's plan for our lives.
21	Paul Imprisoned in Rome, Acts 28:17-31; Philippians 1:12-14	God called Paul to boldly teach the Jews and the Gentiles about Jesus.	To challenge students to live a life faithful to God.

**LEADER'S ENCOURAGEMENT** This week, read John 17:22-24. Please join us in praying, "Thank You, Lord, for connecting us to You and to each other. Help us come together as Your church. Amen."

**Lesson Aims** are based on reflecting God's character as we participate in His actions to, for, and in the world.

**Take Home Elements:** The Journal Entry, Action Card, and Family Discussion Card may be sent home to encourage students to reflect on the lesson. The Journal Entry is an in-depth personal study. The Action Card is a visual reminder of the Bible story, God's action, and how we can join into that action. The Family Discussion Card gives parents and guardians a way to engage their students in what they are learning.

**Leader's Tip:** For larger gatherings, teach THE WELCOME, THE WORSHIP, and THE WORD in a large group setting and divide into small groups for discussion with THE WAY.

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Getting started

## THE WELCOME

**Suggestion:** Choose a game that focuses on ideas such as sailing ships, journeys, truth, or writing letters.

### **ACTIVITY OPTION 1: TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE**

**Purpose:** To introduce the lesson's Big Question: "What truth encourages you most?"

**Supplies:** Paper, pens or pencils, optional: some type of counters (coins, stones, dried beans) or board and marker

**Note:** If you have a large group, you may wish to break into small groups of 4-6 students. Groups make their guesses together. Track the points of each group. The group with the most points wins.

**Directions:**

1. Sit in a circle.
2. Give each student a piece of paper and a pen or pencil.
3. Give students a few minutes to write down three statements about him or herself that others may not know. Two must be true and one a lie. For example: "I was born in Australia. I have never ridden a horse. My middle name is Ruth."
4. At the end of the time, take turns having each student read their 3 statements. The students try to guess which statement is the lie. If a student guesses correctly, they earn a point. If no one guesses correctly, the individual earns five points. Keep track of the points on a board or give students counters (coins, stones, dried beans) to track their own points.
5. When all the students have read their statements, the student with the most points wins.

### **ACTIVITY OPTION 2: HUMAN SCRABBLE**

**Purpose:** To introduce Paul's letters.

**Supplies:** 2 sets of 6 cards each with one of the following letters written on it (A, E, L, P, S, T)

**Preparation:**

**Directions:**

1. Choose 2 sets of 6 students for 2 teams. Give each team member a card from their set.
2. Have each team stand facing the audience in a line on either side of you so the audience can see their letters.
3. When you call out one of the words below, both teams are to organize themselves (each person moves with their letter) so the word can be read by the audience. The first team to get their letters in order wins a point.  
PALEST, PASTEL, PETALS, PLATES, PLEATS, STAPLE
4. If you want to play more than 6 rounds, use the following 5-letter words. The person whose letter is not used must sit down in front of their teammates.  
LAPSE, LEAPS, PALES, PEALS, LEAPT, SPLAT, SLEPT,  
PASTE, TAPES, LEAST, SLATE, STALE, STEAL, TALES
5. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.



The Spirit who connects us

## THE WORSHIP

**Note to Leader:** The instructions below are suggestions only. Adapt this time of worship to suit your environment, resources, and cultural expression. Encourage students to broaden their view of corporate worship by including a variety of expressions such as group prayer, group praise, silent meditation, singing, listening to music, reading scripture, collecting an offering, drama, dance, visual arts, and/or a physical exploration of nature or neighborhoods.

**Ideas for Optional Visuals:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Today, we will worship the Holy Spirit who connects us to Jesus and to each other. Because of the Holy Spirit, Paul's visits and his letters encouraged believers to grow closer to Jesus and to each other. Paul wanted believers to be united so they might glorify God together.**

Read the Unit 4 Focus Verse: 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.



Sing worship songs and guide students to focus on the Holy Spirit who connects us.



Read Romans 15:5-6.



Invite students to offer sentences of praise to God by completing the following sentence:  
**"Lord, we worship You for \_\_\_\_\_."**



## Paul encourages the church **THE WORD** Presentation

**Note to Leader:** Adapt this segment to your setting (Sunday School class, youth group, multi-age gathering, youth camp, retreat, etc.). In some settings, you may choose to have a student read the scripture aloud, and then have the leader, in his or her own words, briefly communicate the Teaching Points, the Christ Connection, and the Big Question. In other settings, a teacher, pastor, or other experienced speaker may present a lecture or extended message that includes those same elements.

### Ideas for Optional Visuals:

You may choose to include an object lesson, video clip, drama, dance, song, or work of art to illustrate the teaching points.

Option 1: Use the map at the end of this Leader's Guide to track Paul's third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:17).

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_



### TEACHING POINTS

Consider current culture and influences impacting your students, and adjust the teaching accordingly.

*Read the suggested scripture and communicate each of the points noted.*

Paul's first missionary journey was with Barnabas and his second journey was with Silas. Together, they started many churches and encouraged believers in places such as Cyprus, Macedonia, Philippi, Corinth, and Ephesus. Today, we will hear about Paul's third journey.

The leader or a student reads Acts 18:23-24.

- Like the first two journeys, this one also began in Antioch.
- Paul visited at least 24 cities including Antioch, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, and finally Jerusalem.
- On this journey, Paul visited churches he had started or visited on his previous journeys. He wanted to encourage them to connect and grow together in faith.

The leader or a student reads Acts 20:22-24, 36-38.

- The Holy Spirit warned Paul that he would experience hardships and imprisonment on his travels. Despite this, Paul continued on his journey, submitting his life to God and trusting Him.
- While on this journey, Paul wrote letters (1 & 2 Corinthians, possibly Romans) to encourage the churches and to connect them to each other. Believers in Macedonia and Achaia gave offerings to Paul to help the poor in the church of Jerusalem (Romans 15:25-26).
- Paul's longest stay on this journey was in Ephesus where he stayed for 3 years training church leaders (mentioned in Acts 20:31). Ephesus was the chief city of the Roman province of Asia (modern day Turkey).
- Toward the end of his journey, from the city of Miletus, Paul met with the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:16-37) before he headed for his final destination, Jerusalem. He wanted to encourage them, give them some final instructions, and say goodbye. He did this because he knew there were people plotting against him in Jerusalem and he didn't know what would happen to him.

# THE WORD Presentation *continued*

Paul was not just an evangelist or missionary, but he continually showed concern for his fellow believers by encouraging and exhorting them. Just as Paul encouraged the local churches and the individuals within those churches, we are called to encourage other believers so the church does not give up hope. One way to encourage the church is to share Paul's words of encouragement to the church in Thessalonica, or the encouragement from the writer of the book of Hebrews.

- The leader or a student reads 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 and Hebrews 10:23-25.

In 1563, with the goal of bringing religious unity to the church, Christian scholars published the Heidelberg Catechism.\* This document uses questions and answers to teach a summary of what we believe as Christians. The first question summarizes the hope we have together as the church.

- The leader or a student reads the following text (Heidelberg Question 1) below.

Heidelberg Question 1: What is your only comfort in life and in death?

Answer: That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to Him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for Him.

Note to leader: In order to communicate most clearly with students of your community, you may choose to replace the reading of the Heidelberg Catechism with one from another document such as the Westminster Catechism, Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, etc.



## Connecting the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Us **CHRIST CONNECTION**

In the whole story of God, what's the connection between this New Testament story and the Old Testament?

- Paul knew God wants people from all over the world to believe in Jesus and follow Him. Over 700 years before Paul's journeys, God promised to bring people to Himself.

The leader or a student reads aloud Isaiah 43:5-7.

- It is by faith in Jesus that we are brought close to God. On his journeys, Paul saw this promise coming true. He saw God bringing people to Himself as they heard and believed in Jesus.



## **THE BIG QUESTION**

Introduce and elaborate on this question. Students will answer it in their discussion group.

**What truth encourages you most?**

# THE WAY Discussion



## GETTING STARTED

Display and review the Discussion Group Covenant below:

**We will include everyone here, treating one another with respect and kindness.  
We will encourage everyone here to express their thoughts and opposing views.**

Every student shares his or her best experience or greatest challenge of the past week.



## READ IT AGAIN

Read Acts 18:23-24; 20:22-24; Hebrews 10:23-25 silently or aloud.

**According to Acts 18:23, what was the purpose of Paul's third journey?**

**What kept Paul going despite the hardships he faced?**

**What is Paul's main concern in Acts 20:22-24 even though he knew he was facing suffering and possible death?**

**What are believers encouraged to do in Hebrews 10:23-25?**

**What do you think it means to "spur one another on to love and good works"?**



## THE BIG QUESTION

Invite students to share their answers.

**What truth encourages you most?**



## TAKE ACTION

Lead students in a discussion using the questions below.

**Why do you think it is so important to encourage the local churches and connect them to one another?**

**How would you describe the hope Christians have?**

**When has someone encouraged you in your faith?**

**What are some specific ways you could encourage other believers?**

Ask each student to complete this sentence: **God calls us to encourage one another in our faith SO THAT others might \_\_\_\_\_.**



## PRAY

Share prayer requests and answered prayers.

Have students pray with partners, or have the whole group pray together.

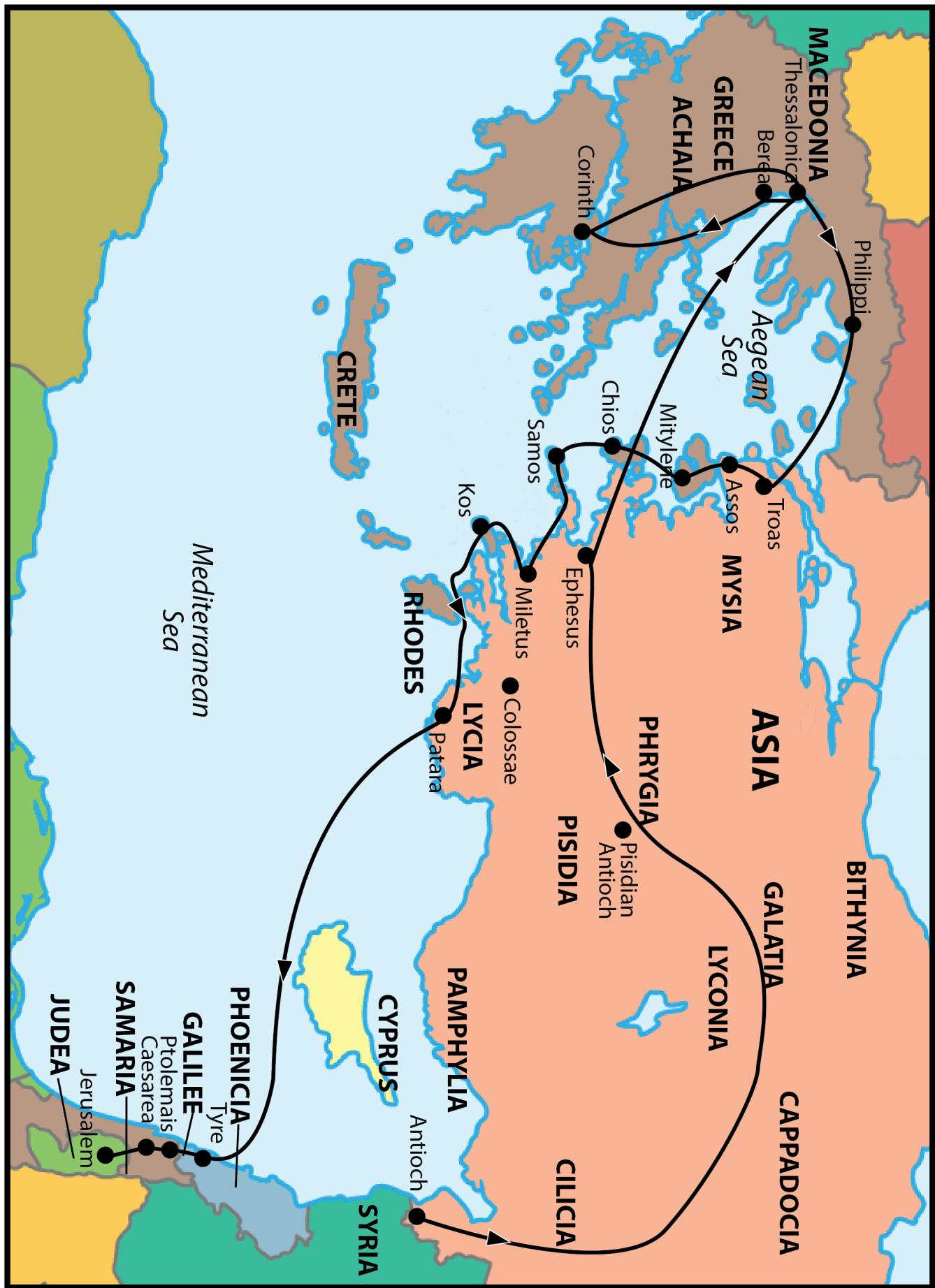


## FINAL FIVE MINUTES

When only 5 minutes remain, begin this segment.

Give each student Action Card #17 and Journal Entry #17. **Take home today's Action Card as a reminder of how we can join in what God is doing. Use the Journal Entry as your personal devotional study. Complete your Journal Entries at home and keep them together in a notebook or in your Bible.** Optional: Provide parent or guardian with Family Discussion Card #17.

# PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY



# PROPHETS & PROMISES

## JOURNAL ENTRY #17

### Paul's Third Journey

Acts 18:23-24; 20:22-24, 36-38

## WHAT DOES IT SAY?

- **Pray!!!** Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what He wants you to learn from this passage.
- **Read Acts 18:23-24; 20:22-24, 36-38; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; and Hebrews 10:23-25.**
- On his way back to Ephesus, what did Paul do in the regions of Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:23)?
- Paul wanted to finish well. What did he aim to do in order to accomplish this (Acts 20:22-24)?
- In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, What did Paul want the Thessalonians to do with the promise he explained?

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Why do you think preaching the gospel and encouraging the church was worth more than his own life to Paul?
- Write Hebrews 10:23-25 in your own words.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

- Why is it important for us to encourage others? What are some specific ways you could encourage the church?
- In your own words, describe the hope Christians have. How do you “hold unwaveringly to the hope” you profess?
- What can you learn from Paul’s example of ministry? How can you apply that to your life today?
- Write down the truth that encourages you most. Who can you share that truth with?

## PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY

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1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-18 & HEBREWS 10:23-25

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WE ARE CALLED TO **ENCOURAGE**  
EACH OTHER IN OUR FAITH.

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