



THE WORD

THE BOOK OF ACTS

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS

For each week we will upload three devotions that build upon and link to our Kids Alive message on Sunday. Three devotions means:

- Those who already do devotions can continue these the other half of the week;
- Those for whom devotions are possible at most every second night of the week can also be included.

The devotions will follow this format:

INTRO

A short introductory activity or discussion

RECAP

A recap of the previous devotion

READ

A short passage will be printed. This makes it less time-consuming and also excludes the need to find a bible.

EXPLORE

Some simple comprehension questions that direct our understanding of the passage

APPLY

Something we can learn from the passage and apply to our own lives

PRAY

Suggested prayer points that come from the passage

MEMORY VERSE

This is only suggested if time permits as it may be a slightly longer activity. You may design something to remember the verse or do some fun games or activities to aid in remembering the verses.

WEEK 1: October 20-26

DAY 1

INTRO:

Play Hide & Seek with your family. When you find each person spotlight them with a torch.

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ ACTS 9:1-9

¹ Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." ⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

EXPLORE:

Why did Saul travel to Damascus? (*To capture Christians and persecute them*)

What did Jesus say to him on the way? (*When you persecute my people you persecute me!*)

What happened to Saul as a result of seeing Jesus? (*He became blind*)

APPLY:

In this passage Saul becomes blind to show that this is what he has always been: he has been unable to see Jesus in all his glory as the Lord, and so he hasn't realised that in hurting God's people he is hurting Jesus himself.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has taken our blindness away and enabled us to see who Jesus truly is. Pray that those you know who can't see the glory of our Lord Jesus might no longer hurt him but become part of God's people.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles." Acts 9:15

Draw the shape of sunglasses on a piece of paper and cut it out so you can wear them. Write on the arms of the sunglasses this week's verse.

WEEK 1: October 20-26

DAY 2

INTRO:

If you could choose to play any instrument what would it be?

RECAP:

What happened to Saul when he saw the glory of the Lord Jesus?

READ ACTS 9:10-16

¹⁰In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. ¹¹The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹²In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." ¹³"Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." ¹⁵But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

EXPLORE:

Why did the Lord Jesus appear to Ananias in a vision? *(To get him to restore Saul's sight)*

Why did Ananias protest? *(He knew how much Saul had hurt the Lord's people and that he had come to do the same in Damascus)*

What was Ananias told about the Lord's plans for Saul? *(Jesus had chosen him to be his instrument to proclaim his name to the Gentiles & Jews; Saul himself would now suffer in the name of Jesus)*

APPLY:

In a great turn-around the man who made many followers of Jesus suffer would now do so himself. How do you feel about this? After our series on 2 Corinthians, are you willing to follow our suffering Lord, or would you prefer not to proclaim the name of Jesus at all to avoid discomfort and possible persecution?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has chosen some people to be evangelists who proclaim his name to the nations. Pray that we might play our part in praying for them (Col 4:2-4) and being willing to suffer for Christ if such is his will for us.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles." **Acts 9:15**

Pretend you are playing your chosen instrument above as you recite this week's verse.

WEEK 1: October 20-26

DAY 3

INTRO:

What ministries are you involved in at church?

RECAP:

What did the Lord Jesus tell Ananias about Saul?

READ ACTS 9:26-31

²⁶When Saul came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. ²⁷But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. ³⁰When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. ³¹Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

EXPLORE:

How did the disciples in Jerusalem respond to Saul's arrival? (*They were afraid of him, not believing he really was a disciple*)

What changed this? (*Barnabas explained to them how Saul had been changed*)

What did Saul then start to do? (*He began to do the good work for which Jesus had saved him*)

APPLY:

Ephesians 2:10 tells us that we have been saved to do good works. As Christ's chosen instrument to take his name to the nations, Saul begins to do this good work immediately, despite the persecution that arises as a result (v29). What is stopping you from doing the good work for which you were saved? Are you helping the church to be strengthened and increase in number as happened in Saul's time?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has given us a time of peace so that the church might be encouraged by the Holy Spirit. Pray that we might commit to the task he has given us, and each play our part in his good work of reconciling the world to himself through Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles." Acts 9:15

Take turns to proclaim this week's verse to the other members of your family.

WEEK 2: October 27-November 2

DAY 1

INTRO:

Who do you know that you would describe as a good person? What is it about them that leads you to do so?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ ACTS 10:1-5

¹At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. ²He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. ³One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" ⁴Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. ⁵Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter."

EXPLORE:

How was Cornelius described? (*As an Italian centurion who feared God, gave generously to the needy and who regularly prayed*)

Why was an angel sent to him? (*Because God had noticed & remembered the good things he had done*)

What did the angel tell Cornelius to do? (*Send for Peter*)

APPLY:

Cornelius was what we would describe as a good person (does your family even do the things he did that caught God's attention?). Yet that was not enough; he still needed to send for Peter to hear the good news of Jesus! Think again of the good people who came to your mind above: how often do you pray that they will more deeply understand the good news about Jesus?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that it ultimately doesn't matter how many good things we do, but what matters most is whether we trust in his Son. Pray that we might regularly pray for the good people who we thought of above to come to love Jesus more, as we do.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism". Acts 10:34

Write the words of this week's verse on some eggs. Get your family members to assemble the verse in its correct order before pointing out that, just as the eggs are all the same on the inside, so this verse teaches that all of us need the Lord Jesus.

WEEK 2: October 27-November 2

DAY 2

INTRO:

Share with your family a few of your favourite things.

RECAP:

What did the angel command Cornelius to do?

READ ACTS 10:27-35

²⁷ Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people.²⁸ He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. ²⁹So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?" ³⁰Cornelius answered: "Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me ³¹and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. ³²Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' ³³So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us." ³⁴Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism ³⁵but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right."

EXPLORE:

What was it against the law for Peter to do? (*Visit Gentiles*)

What had God shown him? (*That he shouldn't call anyone impure or unclean*)

What did meeting with Cornelius help Peter realise? (*That God doesn't show favouritism, but that he accepts people from every nation*)

APPLY:

Isn't it great that our God doesn't have favourites! God accepts anyone who fears him and does what is right when they trust in the Lord Jesus. Since we are called to be like God we too shouldn't have favourites when it comes to people, but we should also accept and welcome people from any nation. How do you go with this at church? How much time do you spend with your favourite people and how much with newcomers?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he accepts anyone who accepts his Son as Lord. Pray that we will be like God, helping anyone who comes to our church to feel welcome.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism". Acts 10:34

Write out this week's verse, surrounding it with pictures of people from every nation cut out of magazines or newspapers.

WEEK 2: October 27-November 2

DAY 3

INTRO:

How have you been criticised recently?

RECAP:

What did God teach Peter when he met Cornelius?

READ ACTS 11:2-4, 15-18

²When Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him ³and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them." ⁴Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story.

¹⁵"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. ¹⁶Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?" ¹⁸When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life."

EXPLORE:

How was Peter criticised? (*Circumcised believers criticised him for meeting and eating with uncircumcised Gentiles*)

How did he defend what he had done? (*They received the Holy Spirit when they learnt about Jesus*)

How did Peter's critics respond when they heard this? (*They stopped objecting and praised God*)

APPLY:

While God's word is for everyone there are times when even God's people find this hard. There are some people that we think are too far from God, or people with whom we would personally prefer not to associate. We need to pray that God will change our hearts as he changed the hearts of Peter's critics.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he grants his Holy Spirit to all so that anyone can repent and find life in Jesus. Pray that we might repent and pray even for our strongest critics, and through the Spirit's power try to encourage more than criticise.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism". Acts 10:34

Use this week's verse to lead your family in prayer for people who are well-known for openly mocking and criticising the Christian faith.

WEEK 3: November 3-9

DAY 1

INTRO:

Have you ever prayed for something that seemed rather unlikely to ever occur?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ ACTS 12:1-5

¹It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. ²He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. ³When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. ⁴After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. ⁵So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

EXPLORE:

Why did Herod imprison Peter? *(The Jews approved of the king killing James and so he prepared to do the same to Peter)*

How was Peter imprisoned? *(He had sixteen soldiers guarding him)*

What was the church's response? *(They still earnestly prayed to God for Peter's release)*

APPLY:

Things must have looked pretty hopeless for the church. One of Jesus' closest friends had been killed, and it looked like the same thing would happen to another of his disciples! However the church still prayed. While they couldn't have understood why the Lord didn't save James they still placed their trust in him to save Peter. THAT'S faith!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that although his plans are too wonderful for us to understand we can still trust him to do what is best. Pray that we will turn to the Lord even when things seem hopeless, for all hope rests in him.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

The word of God continued to spread and flourish. Acts 12:24

Write the words of this week's verse on pieces of paper and spread them out all over a room. Get your family to gather them together and put the verse in its correct order so that they can begin to learn it.

WEEK 3: November 3-9

DAY 2

INTRO:

What is the most unbelievable response to prayer you've ever received?

RECAP:

What was the church's response to Peter's arrest?

READ ACTS 12:11-16

¹¹Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen." ¹²When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. ¹³Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. ¹⁴When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!" ¹⁵"You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel." ¹⁶But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.

EXPLORE:

What did Peter come to realise? (*The Lord had sent an angel to save him*)

What was the church doing when he went to their meeting place? (*They were still praying*)

How did they respond when Peter arrived? (*They didn't believe it!*)

APPLY:

This passage is meant to be quite funny. Peter realised he had really been saved after the event; the church was praying but didn't accept their prayers had been answered; the servant forgot to let Peter in; the church was astonished when they finally opened the door to find him despite repeatedly being told he was there! This all comically shows that God can answer prayers even when we have little faith that he will do so!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has power to answer our prayers in unexpected ways. Pray that we will bring our prayer requests to 'him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine' (Ephesians 3:20).

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

The word of God continued to spread and flourish. Acts 12:24

Write each letter of this week's verse in capitals on a single piece of paper so that it can spread around the different walls in your house where you can see and learn it.

WEEK 3: November 3-9

DAY 3

INTRO:

Make up a story with your family. Give each member one prop that they have to use in their sentences as they add to the story. Make sure it has a happy ending!

RECAP:

How did the church respond when their prayers were answered?

READ ACTS 12:19-23

¹⁹Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. ²⁰He had been quarrelling with the people of Tyre and Sidon, who joined together and sought an audience with him. After securing the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply. ²¹On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. ²²They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." ²³Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. ²⁴But the word of God continued to spread and flourish.

EXPLORE:

With whom had King Herod been arguing? (*The people of Tyre and Sidon*)

What did these people say to the king when their problems were fixed? (*'You're like a god'*)

What happened to King Herod when he didn't praise God? (*He was struck down by an angel and died*)

APPLY:

Strangely, this is meant to be a happy ending! The king who killed the apostle James and who tried to kill Peter is killed himself. While this seems sort of fair, the real point of this story is seen in the fact that the very next verse tells us that, while the king's life ended, God's word continued going forth in power.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has all power and authority, and that no one is like him. Pray that God might soon defeat our every enemy, including evil, persecution and death, so that we might all enjoy a happy ending as we live with him forever.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

The word of God continued to spread and flourish. Acts 12:24

Use this week's verse as a prayer, asking God to continue to make his word spread and flourish during Mission 2020.

WEEK 4: November 10-16

DAY 1

INTRO:

What was the last thing you sent – a package, letter, email, text..? Who did you send it to and why?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ ACTS 13:1-3

¹ Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

EXPLORE:

What sort of people were in the church at Antioch? (*Prophets and teachers*)

What did the Holy Spirit tell the church to do? (*Set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work they were called to do*)

How did the church respond? (*They fasted and prayed before laying hands on them and sending them off*)

APPLY:

While all of us are sent into the world to be a witness of Christ the Holy Spirit sometimes chooses specific people to be sent for special purposes. Spend some time praying for those whom our church has sent to teach God's word to others.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has gifted us with men and women who teach us his word. Pray for these people and others known to us who have been sent with the church's blessing in the Spirit's power.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

All who were appointed for eternal life believed. Acts 13:48

Write the word of this week's verse onto different bits of paper and send your family out to find them so they can assemble the verse and begin to learn it.

WEEK 4: November 10-16

DAY 2

INTRO:

What encouraging things have you heard or seen this week?

RECAP:

Why were Barnabas and Saul sent from the church in Antioch?

READ ACTS 13:14-15, 42-43

¹⁴They went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. ¹⁵After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak."

⁴²As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. ⁴³When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

EXPLORE:

What did the synagogue leaders invite Paul and Barnabas to do? (*Speak to the people*)

Why happened afterwards? (*The people invited them to speak again the following week*)

What happened once all the people were dismissed? (*Some still followed Paul & Barnabas, who urged them to continue in the grace of God*)

APPLY:

Having been sent by the Holy Spirit, it is unsurprising that Paul and Barnabas see some encouraging results to their ministry. The Spirit works in people's hearts and minds to help them know and love Jesus. What encouraging work of the Spirit have you seen recently?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he gives us his Spirit so that, like these people, we might want to know more about Jesus. Pray for your family and friends: may their desire to understand the person and work of Jesus grow more and more!

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

All who were appointed for eternal life believed. Acts 13:48

Point to the members of your family so that when you do, they say the next word in this week's verse.

WEEK 4: November 10-16

DAY 3

INTRO:

What is something that you were working on this week and you weren't sure how it would turn out?

RECAP:

What encouraging thing happened to Paul & Barnabas on their mission?

READ ACTS 13:44-49

⁴⁴On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him. ⁴⁶Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'" ⁴⁸When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honoured the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. ⁴⁹The word of the Lord spread through the whole region.

EXPLORE:

What happened when the whole city turned out to hear Paul? (*The Jews became jealous and abused Paul*)

What did Paul do in response? (*Took the gospel to the Gentiles*)

Who believed the word of the Lord? (*All those appointed or chosen to have eternal life*)

APPLY:

While Paul's message was sometimes greeted with enthusiasm and accepted, often even at the same time it was rejected. Later Paul would reflect that God's word is often received in this way: to some people it is a life-giving perfume, while to others the stink of death (2 Corinthians 2:15-16).

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that everyone he has chosen to be in his family will believe his word. Pray that, while we know not everyone will respond well to what we believe, this will not stop us from speaking the word of the Lord with courage and confidence.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

All who were appointed for eternal life believed. Acts 13:48

Use this week's verse to pray that all those in our community whom the Lord has appointed for eternal life will hear his word and believe.

WEEK 5: November 17-23

DAY 1

INTRO:

Flip a coin five times and see who in your family can guess the most times they think each side will come up.

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ ACTS 14:1-7

¹ At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. ² But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. ³ So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders. ⁴ The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. ⁵ There was a plot afoot among both Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. ⁶ But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country,⁷ where they continued to preach the gospel.

EXPLORE:

In what two ways did the people of Iconium respond? *(A great number of Jews & Greeks believed; some who refused to believe stirred up others and poisoned their minds)*

How did the Lord respond? *(He confirmed the message by enabling Paul and Barnabas to perform signs and wonders)*

What did Paul and Barnabas do when they heard about the plot to harm them? *(They fled to other cities to continue to preach the gospel)*

APPLY:

Once again this passage shows there are two sides to the gospel being preached: some people respond positively, others negatively. However what is more important is the Lord's response: he blesses the preaching of his word and gives strength to enable his people to continue to preach it despite hardship.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he can confirm the message of his grace in different ways. Pray that we might value more the Lord's response than the mixed responses of others.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." **Acts 14:22**

Write this week's verse in tiny writing on different scraps of paper so that it fits onto the side of a coin. Attach the scraps to both sides so that your family members need to flip the coin to work out the whole verse.

WEEK 5: November 17-23

DAY 2

INTRO:

Get your kids to tell a fairy tale with a twist.

RECAP:

What responses did Paul and Barnabas receive to their message?

READ ACTS 14:8-10, 14-18

⁸In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked. ⁹He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed ¹⁰and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

¹⁴ Paul rushed out into the crowd, shouting: ¹⁵"Why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and everything in them. ¹⁶In the past, he let all nations go their own way. ¹⁷Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven & crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy." ¹⁸Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

EXPLORE:

What did Paul do for the lame man? (*Healed him*)

How did the crowd react? (*They tried to sacrifice to Paul as if he were a god*)

What was Paul's response? (*He tried to get them to stop*)

APPLY:

Earlier in Acts Peter healed a lame man, and many people came to faith as a result (4:2). Here however, when Paul does the same thing, people try to worship him! Sometimes when we speak out for Christ very unexpected things result, and they are not always good!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that "he has not left himself without testimony [but] he has shown kindness". Pray that we might courageously point out his gracious provision to others even when we don't know what might result.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." Acts 14:22

Right the words of this week's verse onto a banner to put over a door in your house so that you can read and learn it whenever you go through it.



WEEK 5: November 17-23

DAY 3

INTRO:

Have a planking competition to see who has the strength to hold the position the longest.

RECAP:

How did the crowd respond when Paul healed a lame man?

READ ACTS 14:21-23

²¹ Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch,²² strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. ²³ Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

EXPLORE:

Why did Paul return to the cities he had already visited? *(To strengthen the disciples and to encourage them to remain true to the faith)*

Why did Paul do this? *(He knew we go through many hardships as Christians)*

How did Paul finish off his mission? *(He committed the elders to God in prayer)*

APPLY:

Paul returned to the churches he had started to warn them that following Jesus is not easy. Just as exercise is not easy, but it strengthens our muscles for other activities we will do in the future, so Paul strengthened the people by preparing them for hardships to come.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father for the leaders in our church who strengthen and pray for you. Pray that we would be willing to go through hardships for the sake of Jesus and that we would strengthen and encourage others to do the same.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL- ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." **Acts 14:22**

Do some push-ups. As you come up from each one say a word from this week's verse until the whole verse has been recited.

WEEK 6: November 24-30

DAY 1

INTRO:

Share with your family about a time when you were sent to do a very important job.

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ ACTS 15:1-4

¹Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." ²This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. ³The church sent them on their way, and as they travelled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. ⁴When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

EXPLORE:

What did the visitors from Judea teach? (*That you cannot be saved without circumcision*)

How did the church at Antioch respond? (*They sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to ask about this*)

What did Paul and Barnabas do as they travelled? (*Shared how uncircumcised people had been saved*)

APPLY:

Paul's next trip was a very important one. He had been wasting his time so far on previous trips if indeed it was true that circumcision was necessary for salvation, for he had taught that people were saved by trusting in Jesus! He had to determine what was right, and so set off immediately to figure this out.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father for those in our church who have spent time studying the bible to work out important issues about what we believe. Pray that we might also make time to work out issues that trouble us about our faith so that we might better answer those who question us about what we believe.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved. Acts 15:11

Send the members of your family off to find the words of this week's verse spread in different rooms of your house.

WEEK 6: November 24-30

DAY 2

INTRO:

Discuss with your family what each person would consider to be the perfect gift.

RECAP:

What question were Paul and Barnabas sent to find an answer to?

READ ACTS 15:6-11

⁶The apostles and elders met to consider this question. ⁷After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. ⁸God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. ⁹He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. ¹⁰Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? ¹¹No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

EXPLORE:

What event did Peter remind the apostles and elders of? (*When he met with Cornelius and told him and his family about Jesus*)

What did he conclude had happened at that time? (*God had accepted the Gentiles by faith*)

What was his answer to the question of how we are saved? (*Through the grace of the Lord*)

APPLY:

Peter used two very different images as he described how people might be saved. The first is that making people try to earn salvation by keeping God's laws is like being yoked. This was a way of linking two cows together by a solid piece of wood around their necks: it was hard work to do anything because it so restricted your movement! The other image was that we are saved by grace, as a free gift from our Saviour.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has freely given us the gift of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. Pray that, like the apostles, we might not try to put a yoke on others by adding to the free gift all sorts of requirements that we feel they must meet.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved. Acts 15:11

Come up with actions to help you remember this week's verse.

WEEK 6: November 24-30

DAY 3

INTRO:

How have you been encouraged this week?

RECAP:

How did Peter conclude people are saved?

READ ACTS 15:30-33

³⁰So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. ³¹The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. ³²Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers. ³³After spending some time there, they were sent off by the believers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them.

EXPLORE:

What was sent to the church at Antioch to encourage them? *(Some men bearing a letter (which announced the decision the council had come to))*

How did the church respond? *(They were gladdened, encouraged and strengthened)*

How did the story end? *(The visitors were blessed and returned home)*

APPLY:

Yet again in this section of Acts we have a happy ending as the church is strengthened. The letter announcing the council's decision that we are all saved by grace through faith should gladden us too!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that anyone can be saved by trusting in our Lord Jesus. Pray that we would be so gladdened and encouraged by this message we cannot help but talk about this free gift with others.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved. Acts 15:11

Practise telling this week's verse to others by picking five non-family members who you will share it with before the end of the week.

WEEK 7: December 1-7

DAY 1

INTRO:

What do you feel the Lord is calling you to do?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ ACTS 16:9-14

⁹During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. ¹¹From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. ¹²From there we travelled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. ¹³On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She worshipped God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

EXPLORE:

Why did Paul conclude that God was calling him to Macedonia? (*He saw a vision of a Macedonian calling him to come and preach to them*)

How did Paul and his friends respond? (*They set out immediately*)

What happened when they arrived in Macedonia? (*They went to Philippi, a leading city in the area, and a lady called Lydia responded to Paul's message*)

APPLY:

Paul had a clear idea of what God was calling him to do because he received a vision. It is rather unusual for us to get a similarly straightforward understanding of what God is calling us to do! Instead we generally rely on prayer, advice from others and how God might have us act from the bible. It can be much harder for us to know what God is calling us to, but in faith we trust him to bless our decisions.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that by faith we have such freedom. Pray that we might not resent this, but in faith bring to the Lord some decisions you need to make as you trust him to light your way.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." **Acts 16:31**

Colour in this week's verse by printing http://cdn.jellytelly.com/downloads/jesus+5mfd+activities/acts_16_31_and_palm_sunday_coloring_pages_jellytelly.

WEEK 7: December 1-7

DAY 2

INTRO:

Who is someone that you find it hard to imagine would ever follow Jesus?

RECAP:

Where did God call Paul to go?

READ ACTS 16:16-19

¹⁶Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. ¹⁷She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." ¹⁸She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her. ¹⁹When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities.

EXPLORE:

Who did Paul meet? (*A female slave who was able to predict the future through a spirit*)

What did Paul do to her? (*Commanded the spirit to come out of her*)

How did her owners respond? (*Because this meant they would earn less money they made Paul face the authorities*)

APPLY:

In those days most Jews didn't think much of women, slaves, or people from other nations. This person is all of these things, and has an evil spirit inside of her as well! Paul saved her, which contrasts with her owners, who only cared about her as a source of money.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he loves and is able to save everyone. Pray for the people you thought of above, for no one is beyond God's power to save.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." **Acts 16:31**

Draw a picture of today's story and write above it this week's verse.

WEEK 7: December 1-7

DAY 3

INTRO:

If someone asked you "what must I do to be saved?" what would you answer?

RECAP:

Who did Paul meet in Philippi?

READ ACTS 16:23-31

²³After Paul & Silas were thrown into prison, the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. ²⁴When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. ²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. ²⁷The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" ²⁹The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."

EXPLORE:

How would you describe Paul and Silas' experience of jail? (*While they were guarded carefully and their feet were in stocks they were still praising God!*)

Why did the jailer get so concerned? (*There was a violent earthquake which caused all the prison doors to open so that he thought the prisoners had escaped*)

How did Paul and Silas answer his question? (*We are saved by believing in the Lord Jesus*)

APPLY:

Salvation is so simple: all we must do is believe that Jesus is the Lord and that he has already done all that is needed for us to be saved!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that we are saved by simply trusting in Jesus. Pray for particular opportunities that you can think of that our church has to share this message with others!

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." **Acts 16:31**

Write out this week's verse on little slips of paper that you can hand out to others!

WEEK 8: December 8-14

DAY 1

INTRO:

How would you expect people you know to respond if you talked to them about Jesus?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ ACTS 17:1-5

¹When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ²As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,³explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah," he said.⁴Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women. ⁵But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd.

EXPLORE:

What did Paul do in the synagogue at Thessalonica? (*He reasoned, explained and proved from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah because he suffered and rose*)

What positive responses did he receive? (*He persuaded some Jews, a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women*)

What negative responses did he receive? (*Other Jews were jealous so they started a riot*)

APPLY:

Paul's ministry received both positive and negative responses. We should expect the same: the Lord has clearly taught us that, while not everyone will respond well to what we believe, we need to speak of Jesus so that those who believe might hear the good news!

PRAY:

Thank God that so many people in Thessalonica responded well to Paul's message. Pray that we might not be put off by the expectations of people responding badly but that we might persist in spreading the good news of Jesus like Paul.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

Some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again." **Acts 17:32**

Play Charades, miming this week's verse to see if your family can figure it out.

WEEK 8: December 8-14

DAY 2

INTRO:

Is there anything that you do every day with great eagerness?

RECAP:

What responses did Paul get to his message in Thessalonica?

READ ACTS 17:10-15

¹⁰As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. ¹²As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. ¹³But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. ¹⁴The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. ¹⁵Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

EXPLORE:

What did the Bereans do every day with great eagerness? *(They received Paul's message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if it was true)*

What was the result of this? *(Many believed)*

What did the Thessalonians do when they heard what was happening? *(Stirred up the crowds so that Paul had to leave)*

APPLY:

If every day someone double-checked what we had said we would feel they didn't trust us, but here doing so is considered a noble thing. Perhaps we should eagerly read the word every day to see if all we have been taught is true!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he produced the desire and will in the Bereans to study his word daily. Pray that he might do the same in us!

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

Some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again." Acts 17:32

Practice saying this week's verse by getting one member of your family to say the first part before another member responds with the second half.

WEEK 8: December 8-14

DAY 3

INTRO:

What do you generally do to pass the time when you're waiting?

RECAP:

What did the Bereans do when they heard Paul's message?

READ ACTS 17:16-17, 31-34

¹⁶While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.

³¹"God has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead." ³²When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject."³³At that, Paul left the Council. ³⁴Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

EXPLORE:

How did Paul feel while he was waiting for his friends to turn up? (*Greatly distressed that the city he was waiting in was full of idols*)

What did Paul do about this? (*He reasoned with those in the synagogue and marketplace*)

Who became a Christian as a result? (*Dionysius, Damaris and a number of others*)

APPLY:

It's pretty cool that even while Paul was waiting for his friends to do ministry he couldn't help but talk about Jesus! Despite the constant negative responses that Paul had experienced he continued to declare the good news with people wherever they were, whether the synagogue or the marketplace.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father for Paul's resilience and determination to speak about Jesus. Pray that we might also be willing to talk about what we believe whenever and wherever we might be.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

Some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again." Acts 17:32

Say this week's verse with a sneer, and then in a normal speaking voice.

WEEK 9: December 15-21

DAY 1

INTRO:

If you could pick a team to play your favourite sport with you, who would you pick?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ ACTS 18:1-5

¹After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ²There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, ³and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. ⁴Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. ⁵When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.

EXPLORE:

Why did Paul choose to work with Aquila and Priscilla? (*They were all tentmakers*)

What did this allow Paul to do on the weekend? (*Reason with those in the synagogue*)

What did Paul do when the rest of his team arrived? (*He devoted himself to preaching*)

APPLY:

While we often don't notice it, Paul had built up quite a team to assist him in ministry. He didn't work alone but had many people who served alongside him, enabling him to devote himself exclusively to the task given him by the risen Lord Jesus.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father for those you serve with at our church. Pray that we might work together well in a loving, united and focused way.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. Acts 18:11

Google 'Corinth' and pick your favourite picture of the place. Try to draw it, and then add this week's verse.

WEEK 9: December 15-21

DAY 2

INTRO:

If you had to move away with your family, who would you especially miss of those you left behind?

RECAP:

What did Paul's team help him to do?

READ ACTS 18:9-11, 18-21

⁹One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. ¹⁰For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city." ¹¹So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

¹⁸Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchreae because of a vow he had taken. ¹⁹They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. ²¹But as he left, he promised, "I will come back if it is God's will." Then he set sail from Ephesus.

EXPLORE:

How long did Paul stay in Corinth? (*A year and a half*)

Where did he travel to next? (*Syria; specifically Ephesus*)

Who did Paul take with him? (*Priscilla and Aquila*)

APPLY:

As Paul continued his missionary work he took Priscilla and Aquila with him as they continued to free him up to reason with the Jews in the synagogue about Jesus. Who do you feel frees you up to do more ministry? It's sometimes said that people can double or half our ministry; who would you particularly miss if you couldn't serve with?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has created us to live in community and to serve with others in his family. Pray that we might double the ministry of others by being helpful to them!

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. Acts 18:11

Work together to say this week's verse by getting each family member to say one word only before passing on to someone else to say the next.

WEEK 9: December 15-21

DAY 3

INTRO:

What particular ministry gifts do you feel you have?

RECAP:

Who did Paul take with him to Ephesus?

READ ACTS 18:24-28

²⁴Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. ²⁵He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great passion and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. ²⁷When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. ²⁸For he refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.

EXPLORE:

What ministry gifts did Apollos have? *(He had a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, he spoke boldly with great passion, he was able to prove that Jesus was the Messiah)*

What was his weakness? *(He knew only John's baptism [that means he was expecting the Messiah to come but hadn't heard that Jesus had arrived!])*

What ministry gifts did Priscilla and Aquila have? *(They met with Apollos to explain to him the way of God more accurately)*

APPLY:

Once again this is a beautiful picture of different people working together in ministry. Apollos is gifted for up-front public ministry while Priscilla and Aquila do the quieter, behind-the-scenes work of ministry explaining the bible. Which sort of ministry do you think you are better at?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has gifted the body of Christ with people who can work together to do all kinds of ministry. Pray that God will help you find both what you do best and the willingness to do it without envying the ministry of others.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. Acts 18:11

Work to your gifts by getting your family to do what they do best with this week's verse, whether that is designing a poster, doing actions, or something else entirely!

WEEK 10: December 22-28

DAY 1

INTRO:

Ask your children: what is the last race you were in? Where did you finish?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ ACTS 20:17-24

¹⁷From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church.¹⁸When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia.¹⁹I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. ²⁰You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. ²¹I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. ²²And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. ²³I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.²⁴However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace."

EXPLORE:

To whom did Paul give this farewell speech? (*The elders of the Ephesian church*)

Where was Paul going? (*To suffer in Jerusalem*)

What was Paul's aim in going there? (*To finish the race and complete the task that the Lord Jesus had given him: testifying to the good news of God's grace*)

APPLY:

As Paul drew near to what he expected would be the end of his life he looked back on his ministry and had no regrets. He felt he had not hesitated to tell the good news both publicly and privately and wanted to finish off doing the same. How do you feel you've gone in this area?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has given us his Spirit of power so that we might be strong and courageous in testifying to his grace. Pray that his Spirit will so fill us that we too might have no regrets in speaking out for Jesus in Mission 2020 and so finish it well.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

My only aim is to finish the race & complete the task the Lord Jesus gave me. Acts 20:24

Organise a relay race where each participant must grab a word from this week's verse and pass it on to the next person. Continue until you can assemble the entire verse.

WEEK 10: December 22-28

DAY 2

INTRO:

What do you think is the biggest threat or danger to our church?

RECAP:

Where was Paul going?

READ ACTS 20:25-31

²⁵“Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. ²⁶Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. ²⁷For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. ²⁸Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. ²⁹I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.”

EXPLORE:

Why did Paul say he was ‘innocent of the blood of any of’ the Ephesians? *(He had proclaimed to them the whole will of God)*

What did he warn them to do? *(Watch themselves and each other by being shepherds)*

Why did he warn them that this was necessary? *(Because wolves would come in and arise to destroy the flock by distorting the truth)*

APPLY:

Paul thought the biggest threat to the church was false teaching. He declared that he was innocent of this, because he had taught the whole will of God, but he feared that others would come after him who would change the gospel. The church’s best defence was for the shepherds or pastors of the church to keep watch as overseers.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father for your pastors at St Paul’s. Pray that they (and you!) might keep watch carefully to protect the flock from false teaching.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

My only aim is to finish the race & complete the task the Lord Jesus gave me. Acts 20:24

Write out this week’s verse in big letters on a large piece of paper. Throw little pieces of paper at it, aiming to hit each word in turn so that you can read out the whole verse in its correct order.

WEEK 10: December 22-28

DAY 3

INTRO:

If you were leaving your school, work or church and were asked to say a few words before you left, what do you think would be important to say to everyone?

RECAP:

What did Paul feel was a real danger to the church in Ephesus?

READ ACTS 20:32-38

³² "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³ I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. ³⁵ In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" ³⁶ When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. ³⁷ They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. ³⁸ What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

EXPLORE:

How did Paul leave the Ephesian church? *(In God's hands; by committing them to the word)*

What did Paul want his last words to be? *(He had set an example of working hard so that the church might do the same in order to help the poor)*

How did the church respond? *(They all wept, for they were upset & grieving)*

APPLY:

Unsurprisingly Paul wanted his last words to be about God: he committed the church to Him and prayed to Him for the church. What is more unexpected is that in his farewell speech Paul also pointed out that he had worked hard so the church would do the same and so help the weak. This was important to Paul; he said the same to the Thessalonians (2 The 3:6-15) & reminded the Ephesians of this (Eph 4:28). How important is this for you?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has given jobs to some people in your family so that you might receive money. Pray that like Paul we will use this money not just for ourselves but for the weak, the poor and for others in need.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

My only aim is to finish the race & complete the task the Lord Jesus gave me. Acts 20:24

Make it your aim to run a few laps around your backyard, saying this week's verse as you go.



ST PAUL'S
CASTLE HILL