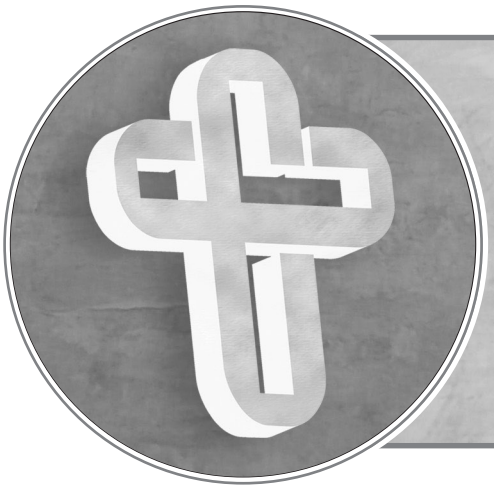


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

MARCH 28 2026

the inspiring minority

Scripture Story: Acts 19; 20:1.
Commentary: *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 27, 28.
Key Text: Acts 19:11, 12.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Paul had to face great opposition when preaching the gospel. God not only used Paul to work miracles to guide the pagan population back to the true God, but He also gave him the courage he needed to face immense confrontation. Paul had to stand for what he knew was right, even if he had mobs chasing him down!

This lesson examines the courage of those who were willing to stand up for what was right in the face of an offended, angry majority. The majority was prejudiced against the Christian movement. Some hated Paul because he was affecting their profit in the sale of idols. Some hated Paul because he was adding to the Jewish belief system, a threat to the established power structure. Others had no personal reason to dislike Paul at all, but simply joined in on the public fervor, unwilling to be outside the safety of the majority's approval.

God never said that standing for the right would make us popular or part of the majority's clique. God did tell us, though, that He would be with us, that He would provide us with courage, and that we would be rewarded for our faith.

Facing opposition is never easy. It's never comfortable. God never asks us to face opposition for no reason, either. There are people without the strength to stand up who need a champion. There are people loaded down with questions who need to see an answer in your relationship with God.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand how a relationship with God gives us courage to face opposition. *(Know)*
- Sense a responsibility to stand for what the Holy Spirit tells us we must stand for. *(Feel)*
- Choose to live life courageously, living life to the fullest with God as our support. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Great Controversy, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 8

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God's adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the global flood, as presented in the historical account of Genesis 1-11. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation (Gen. 3; 6-8; Job 1:6-12; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-18; Rom. 1:19-32; 3:4; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; 1 Cor.

4:9; Heb. 1:14; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 3:6; Rev. 12:4-9).

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Give the students a list of causes and ask them to prioritize them. The first should be the one they would be willing to die for, and the last should be the one they simply don't care about. Examples of causes could be: world peace, a cure for cancer, environmental issues, freedom of religion, rehabilitating criminals, educating people on the dangers of smoking, and so on.

After the students have put the causes into the order that best represents their personal feelings, ask them why they ordered them the way they did. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. This is meant to get them thinking about their own priorities and values.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks paid her fare and boarded the Cleveland Avenue bus home from work one night. She worked at a department store as a seamstress, and she was thankful to sink into a seat.

According to municipal law, Blacks and Whites were segregated in virtually every aspect of everyday life. On buses there were "colored sections" where non-White people were permitted to sit. When the "White section" filled up, the people sitting in the "colored section" were expected to give up their seats.

On this particular night, some Caucasian people boarded the bus and the bus driver, James Blake, ordered the four people seated in the "colored section" to vacate their seats. Three of them stood up, but Rosa Parks did not. Instead she scooted in to the window seat. When the bus driver asked her why she would not stand, she said, "I don't think I should have to."

"Are you going to stand up?" he asked.

"No," she said.

"If you don't, I'll call the police and have you arrested," he said.

"You may do that," she replied. The police were called, and she was arrested.

Many years later, Mrs. Parks commented on that night: "People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day. I was not old, although some people have an image of me as being old then. I was 42. No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in."

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Rosa Parks has gone down in history as a woman who was willing to "sit down" for what was right. Because of Mrs. Parks, and other courageous people like her, great advances were made in human rights. Generations after her have grown up in a much different America because of her decision not to give in.

God needs courageous people who are willing to stand up for what is right in the seemingly unimportant situations like a bus ride. He needs people who are not willing to compromise their beliefs or the peace of their conscience.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- What was the reason for Demetrius's behavior toward Paul?
- Do you think that Paul was aware of why the city had been thrown into an uproar?
- Do you think that the city clerk was courageous in facing the mob? Why or why not?
- What do you think had a calming effect on the crowd?
- In the mob, it says that "most of the people did not even know why they were there." What made them follow the group in this show of rage?

Extra Questions for Teachers

- Who began the riot, and why?
- Why do you think the majority of the people went along with the mob?
- Who acted in a courageous way? Defend your choice.

Use the following as other teachable passages that relate to today's story: Isaiah 44:6-23; Exodus 20:1-4.

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

The Continuum

This is useful for discussing ideas that may be controversial.

Make two signs: one that reads "Agree" and one that reads "Disagree." Put them on opposite sides of the room. Ask a series of questions and ask the students to stand at a point along the continuum between the two signs. (See the Closing Activity for sample questions.) Ask several students why they chose the position they did. Discuss why someone else might have chosen a different position. Do not judge opinions, or the students will not want to participate in the discussion.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

Ephesus was the home of the temple of Artemis—one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was built in 559 B.C., and there is evidence of earlier temples being built on the same site as early as the Bronze Age. Ephesus was an economically vibrant area, and merchants from all over Asia Minor were drawn to the temple of Artemis. The temple was constructed over a period of 220 years and was made of pure marble. Inside the temple was an idol of Artemis.

Festivities were celebrated each May, and Ephesus was the destination of many pilgrimages.

Demetrius was a silversmith who made shrines of Artemis. He would have made a good amount of money from the many tourists, devotees, and pilgrims who came through Ephesus to see the magnificent temple and worship there.

Paul was preaching that idols could not aid their worshippers and that there was one God who would hear the prayers of His people, and of this God, it was a blasphemy to create an image. Many pagans were being converted, so many, in fact, that it was having an effect on the profits of the silversmiths who made shrines of the goddess!

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

As mentioned above, put up two signs that read "Agree" and "Disagree." Ask the students to stand in a position between the two signs in response to some statements:

For example:

- "I would be willing to die for something I believed in."
- "I think people are more important than ideas."
- "I believe that God wants us to stand up for the truth."

Ask the students why they chose the position they

cornerstoneconnections

Teaching From the Lesson

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite students to share the Key Text *with the class if they have committed it to memory.*
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Acts of the Apostles. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

did. Is there anything that they are willing to stand for, no matter what the cost?

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Having the courage to stand for your beliefs in the face of opposition is not easy. Paul faced an entire city filled with devoted pagans with a financial interest in their goddess's temple. And we all know how seriously people take their money! God was with Paul, though, and protected him through it. In fact, God used a pagan official to calm down the crowd that wanted to kill him.

We can trust God to be with us and protect us when we stand up for what is right, even if we have to be the unpopular minority when we do so. God rewards us when we are loyal to Him, and He gives us the courage and wisdom to stand for what He thinks is important!



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 27, 28.

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
MARCH 28 2026

STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Acts 19; Acts 20:1.
Commentary: *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 27, 28.

the inspiring minority



Photo by The Crystal Lenz

keytext

"God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them."

(Acts 19:11, 12, NIV)

flashlight

"It was by cherishing a humble, teachable spirit that these men gained the experience that enabled them to go out as workers into the harvest field. Their example presents to Christians a lesson of great value. There are many who make but little progress in the divine life because they are too self-sufficient to occupy the position of learners. They are content with a superficial knowledge of God's Word. They do not wish to change their faith or practice and hence make no effort to obtain greater light" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 283).

what do you think?

Do you know the saying, "You can't make everyone happy all of the time"? In any group of people, at any time of day, there will always be someone who loves you, someone who hates you, someone who thinks you make ridiculous decisions, and someone who respects you from a distance. There are times, however, when the balance seems to be off!

Have you ever had an experience when you felt like everyone was against you? Have you ever been picked on? What do you think the reason was for this?

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did you know?

If the followers of Christ were but earnest seekers after wisdom, they would be led into rich fields of truth as yet wholly unknown to them. He who will give himself fully to God will be guided by the divine hand. He may be lowly and apparently ungifted; yet if with a loving, trusting heart he obeys every intimation of God's will, his powers will be purified, ennobled, energized, and his capabilities will be increased. As he treasures the lessons of divine wisdom, a sacred commission will be entrusted to him; he will be enabled to make his life an honor to God and a blessing to the world" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 283, 284).

INTO THE STORY

"About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: 'You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.'

"When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!' Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into the theater together. Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

"The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front, and they shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!'

"The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: 'Fellow Ephesians, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of what happened today. In that case we would not be able to account for this com-

motion, since there is no reason for it.' After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly."

(Acts 19:23-41, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What was the reason for Demetrius's behavior toward Paul?

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Do you think that Paul was aware of why the city had been thrown into an uproar? Why or why not?

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Do you think that the city clerk was courageous in facing the mob? Why or why not?

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What do you think had a calming effect on the crowd?

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In the mob, it says that "most of the people did not even know why they were there." What made them follow the group in this show of rage?

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What can we learn from this story about peer pressure?

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punch lines

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" **(Joshua 1:9, NIV).**

"When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus" **(Acts 4:13, NIV).**

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it" **(Matthew 7:13, NIV).**

"If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all" **(Isaiah 7:9, NIV).**

"Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident" **(Psalm 27:3, NIV).**

"Everyone will hate you because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved" **(Mark 13:13, NIV).**

further insight

"If the follower of Christ would grow up 'unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ' (Ephesians 4:13), he must eat of the bread of life and drink of the water of salvation. He must watch and pray and work, in all things giving heed to the instructions of God in His Word."

—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* pp. 284, 285

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Psalm 27:3.

Have you ever felt as if everyone was against you? Perhaps you were being picked on for not fitting in, or maybe you did something that was considered unpopular. Regardless of the reason why, being the unpopular minority is never a comfortable experience. As a Christian, you might find yourself in this situation in order to stand up for what you believe in. Psalm 27:3 says: "Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident" (NIV).

Are you willing to take a stand for what is right, even if you are the only one to do it? How can you do so fearlessly and confidently?

Sunday

Read Joshua 1:9.

In our story this week, we see one man's ambition for wealth and position fueling a mob against Paul. Paul had not hurt anyone. In fact, he was preaching love and decent living! He might not have even known that the riot was caused by one man who resented the decrease in his sales of idols. This was a terrifying situation. Sometimes when it feels like the entire world is against us, it isn't because of anything we have done wrong. Sometimes it is about something else entirely. How can you trust God enough to continue doing the right thing, even when everything seems to go crazy around you?

Monday

Read Acts 19:11, 12.

The Key Text chosen for memorizing this week tells us about the miracles that God worked for people through Paul. God was able to work through Paul because Paul was both humble and determined to do the right thing no matter what the cost. People were healed and made happier because of God's use of Paul. What do you think God could do through you for your friends and acquaintances if you let Him? How could other people be made happier because they knew you? How might they realize that there is a God because of your life?

Tuesday

Read Acts 4:13.

Ellen White emphasizes the need for Christians to be humble. Christians need to take God seriously, not themselves! If we take ourselves too seriously, we end up like the bully who was so concerned about his sales. In order for God to do something with us, He has to be able to teach us; and to be able to teach us, we have to be flexible. There is always something more to learn, something deeper to realize. Try to consciously keep an open mind today and ask God to teach you something new.

Wednesday

Read Matthew 7:13.

It isn't easy sometimes doing the right thing. It seems that the right path tends to be the harder one a lot of the time! (Mark 13:13). But God never asks us to do it alone. God is with us, protecting us and supporting us every step of the way. It takes courage to face adversity in order to do what God asks us to do. It takes courage to be different from the rest of the crowd. It is that God-given courage that sets us apart and makes it obvious that we have been with Jesus. Have you been waffling about something you believe in? Ask God for the courage to stand firm, and watch how He blesses you for your commitment!

Thursday

Read Isaiah 7:9.

It's much easier to be in the majority, blending in and enjoying the approval of your peers than it is to be the unpopular minority. In any group, there are always the few who are picked on and aren't accepted. It isn't easy to stand up against the majority, but if no one does, nothing will ever change! Are there any people in your social sphere who are left out or picked on? Do you have the courage to stand up for them and do the right thing, even though you would have to oppose the popular majority? How big of a difference could you make in one person's life for taking a stand?

Friday

Read Mark 13:13.

God expects us to stand firm on the important issues. In your relationship with God, what issues has God shown you to be most important? What issues or positions matter most to you? What is worth standing for? And how can you stand firm in a way that shows people the kind, gracious, awesome God we serve?

this week's reading*

The Acts of the Apostles (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 27, 28.

* Unlikely Leaders is a special adaptation of *The Acts of the Apostles* created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.