

YEAR C | QUARTER 2

11

Keep Talking

Grace
God's grace transforms us.

POWER TEXT

"Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you" (Acts 18:9, 10).

KEY REFERENCES

- Acts 9:15, 16; Acts 20:24
- 2 Timothy 4:6-8
- *The Acts of the Apostles,* chap. 50, pp. 509-513
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 10, pp. 149-151
- student story on page 122 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 10, The Experience of Salvation
- No. 17, Spiritual Gifts and Ministries
- No. 11, Growing in Christ

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that God is with us always, even when we're serving in difficult situations.
- **Feel** assured that the Lord is with us in all circumstances.
- **Respond** by sharing their faith in all circumstances.

POWERPOINT

We speak about God's grace wherever we are.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Paul is frequently arrested and thrown into jail as punishment for telling people about Jesus. But even when under arrest, Paul finds a way to witness. If Paul could serve others in these situations, surely we can be of service in all the circumstances of our lives.

This is a lesson about service.

Sometimes we look for the "right" conditions to serve God. However, all conditions are the "right" conditions. No matter where we are, or what the circumstances are, we can serve God by sharing our faith.

Teacher Enrichment

"Paul carried with him the atmosphere of heaven. All who associated with him felt the influence of his union with Christ. The fact that his own life exemplified the truth he proclaimed, gave convincing power to his preaching. Here lies the power of truth. The unstudied, unconscious influence of a holy life is the most convincing sermon that can be given in favor of Christianity. Argument, even when unanswerable, may provoke only opposition; but a godly example has a power that it is impossible wholly to resist.

"The apostle lost sight of his own approaching sufferings in his solicitude for those whom he was about to leave to cope with prejudice, hatred, and persecution. The few Christians who accompanied him to the place of execution he endeavored to strengthen and encourage by repeating the promises given for those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. He assured them that nothing would fail of all that the Lord has spoken concerning His tried and faithful children" (*The Acts of the Apostles,* pp. 510, 511).

What is my approach to evangelism? What can I learn from Paul?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice. »

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Faithful Servants* *B. The Blindfold Conspiracy*	Bibles, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk, paper, pencils Bibles, paper, pencils, blindfolds, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk
* **Prayer and Praise**	15-20	See page 117. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, offering plate/basket, world map, pushpins
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	rope/twine, paper, pencil Bibles Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Scenarios*	
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Perseverance of Paul Certificates*	Bibles, "Perseverance of Paul Certificates" (p. 152), pencils
* **Closing**		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils

Faithful Servants

Write the scrambled names below on a board. Ask the students to unscramble the Bible character names and write them on a piece of paper.

1. n a l i d e
2. a n o h j
3. a h h a n n
4. s e m s o
5. s h e j o p
6. s u e s j
7. a n h o
8. u a l p
9. j i a h e l
10. o b j

Answers: 1. Daniel; 2. Jonah; 3. Hannah; 4. Moses; 5. Joseph; 6. Jesus; 7. Noah; 8. Paul; 9. Elijah; 10. Job.

Debriefing

Ask **Who thinks they have unscrambled all 10 of them? Let's go through the answers now. What do these Bible characters have in common?** Give time for students to answer. **They were all faithful servants of God even though they lived through trying circumstances.** Review the circumstances of each character. Say: **Sometimes we are called to serve by witnessing in difficult circumstances. Let's find and read our power text today from Acts 18:9, 10:**

"Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you."

(Read only the memory verse part to help them take the message for themselves.) **Just as Paul did, we can trust that God is with us as**

We speak about God's grace wherever we are.

Accommodation for students with special needs: Consider pairing students who need assistance with partners who would help them with this activity.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils
- ☐ blindfolds
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

The Blindfold Conspiracy

Ask three or four volunteers to write a list of five of their favorite foods on the board while they are blindfolded. Explain that the winner is the person whose list has the straightest left margin. If the margins are equally straight, the first one finished wins. Blindfold the volunteers. Quietly whisper to one of them that you're going to remove his or her blindfold. Motion to the rest of the group not to say anything as you do so.

Say: **"Ready, set, go!"** Have the volunteers write their lists. When they're finished, have them all remove their blindfolds. Judge the columns. The contestant who wasn't blindfolded should have the straightest left column. Declare that person the winner.

Debriefing

Afterward, explain to the rest of the contestants what you did. Then ask: **What happened? Why was it easiest for the person who wasn't blindfolded to win? What advantage was there in being able to see the board?**

Say: **No matter how hard the blindfolded people tried, they really couldn't make a straight list, because they couldn't see the whole picture. In the same way, none of us can see the whole picture of our lives from beginning to end. We don't know what's going to happen tomorrow or what kinds of hardships we may have to endure, but God asks us to be faithful followers and servants of His, no matter what happens. When we look back on our lives, we can see how God has led us, and we can thank Him even for the difficulties because they have taught us to grow in Him.**

Let's find and read our power text from Acts 18:9, 10:

"Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you."

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Prayer and Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Give Them All to Jesus" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 91)
"Cares Chorus" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 141)
"He's Able" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 100)
"We Are Soldiers" (*Praise Time,* no. 37)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map and push pins

Use Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. For the mission story, have a map of the world where the students can identify the location of the mission story and compare it to where they are. You could use pushpins to mark where the mission story takes place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering plate OR basket

Say: **Our offerings are one way of sharing with people in other places. When we give our offerings, we give people the tools to be more effective where they are.**

Prayer

Do a popcorn prayer. Popcorn prayers are where people just say one sentence at a time. The sentence can express a felt need, thanks, or petition. When the sentence prayers stop "popping," close by asking for strength to share your faith wherever you are.

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ twine OR rope
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencil

Introducing the Bible Story

Ask for a volunteer. Seat that person on the floor and then tie their hands and feet together in front of them with twine or rope. While they are still seated on the floor, have that person try to write on a sheet of paper their name, address, and phone number. Ask: **How hard or easy is it to write that way? Do you think you would write long letters to friends you were concerned about while you were in that position?**

Say: **Today our Bible story is about Paul and how he spoke and wrote for Christ even when he was in prison.**

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles

Experiencing the Story

Ask student volunteers to read aloud Acts 9:15, 16 and Acts 20:22-24.

Say: **It is obvious from these texts that God had called Paul to serve Him in some difficult situations. Also, Paul had accepted the challenge and wouldn't let anything stop him from speaking for Christ.**

Divide the students into four groups. Tell the groups that you are going to assign each some Bible verses that tell of a time that Paul was arrested or in prison and still talked about the love and grace of Jesus to his captors: Acts 16:22-34; Acts 21:27-40; Acts 23:9-11; Acts 28:17-20.

Say: **I would like your group to present your passage to us. You can assign one person or several to read it aloud. The other members can act it out, or hold signs explaining who they are, etc. After you have read the passage to the rest of us, give us hints to help us remember where Paul was and what other circumstances surrounded this incident.** You may also want to have the "audience" try to find the incident in the book of Acts.

Give groups time to plan their presentation and then call on each group to present to the rest of the class.

Remind the students that, as Paul did, we can trust that God is with us as

We speak about God's grace wherever we are.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles

Exploring the Bible

Ask the students, in groups, to find the following verses: Genesis 39:11-23; 41:9-16 (Joseph); Daniel 6 (Daniel); Acts 12:1-19 (Peter). Say: **Men of God have often been put in prison. As a group, read these texts and try to discover:**

1. Why were they thrown in prison?

2. What happened to them while they were there?

3. How were they able to witness to others by being a prisoner?

Give groups time to read and process the texts. Call on groups to share their conclusions.

Say: **Often in trials such as these men faced, we are able to see most clearly the wonderful things that God can do for us and through us. It gives us a chance to practice trusting Him completely.**

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Accommodation for students with special needs: Use the Bibles with tabs to help students who don't know all the books of the BIble to become familiarized with them.

Scenarios

Read the following scenarios to the students:

1. You are taking a test at school and see someone copying from your paper. When the teacher marks the papers, she calls you and the person who copied you in to see her. She points out that your papers are too similar for coincidence. The other person does not admit that they copied from your paper. The teacher says that both of you will fail if someone doesn't confess.

2. You are the only member from your family who goes to church. The rest of your family laughs and makes fun of you. On Sabbath they turn up the TV extra loud so that it disturbs you when you are reading in another part of the house.

3. Your parents have divorced, both have remarried, and you spend your time between their two new families. You feel lost, alone, and unwanted as you try to fit into each of their lives part-time.

Debriefing

Ask: **How can you serve God in these situations? What can you say? What can you do? What practical ways can you witness? It does not matter what the circumstances are, God is with you and will help and support you. If you are willing, He will open doors for you to serve Him by witnessing to those around.** Say: **Let's say our power text together:**

"Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you."

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4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- Bibles
- "Perseverance of Paul Certificates" (p. 152)
- pencils

Perseverance of Paul Certificates

Read Romans 5:3-5 aloud. *The Living Bible* presents a particularly meaningful paraphrase: "We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us—they help us learn to be patient. And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time we use it until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady. Then, when that happens, we are able to hold our heads high no matter what happens and know that all is well, for we know how dearly God loves us, and we feel this warm love everywhere within us because God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love."

Ask: **Have you ever rejoiced in your sufferings? When?** Say: **I want you to close your eyes and imagine Paul on the stairs of the Roman barracks or speaking before Nero. Imagine him "holding his head high" and persevering no matter what happened. We have a certificate which we would like to award to modern-day "Pauls."**

Distribute "Perseverance of Paul Certificates." Say: **Think of someone you know who seems to have a strong and steady faith and who holds their head high no matter what happens. Fill in their name on the certificate. Then think of how and when you are going to present that person with this award this week.**

Debriefing

Say: **Share with a partner the name of the person to whom you are going to present this certificate.**

When you give the certificate to the person for whom you made it, explain that you have been studying about Paul. Explain why you feel the person deserves this award. Remind them that

We speak about God's grace wherever we are.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Say: **Dear God: When we find ourselves in difficult circumstances, please give us the courage and perseverance to witness for You. Thank You. Amen.**

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php ?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **God reveals Himself to us through nature and through His Word. We learn more about His love as we spend time with Him.**

Notes

Student lesson

Keep Talking

Stand up and stretch as high and as wide as you can. How does that feel? Imagine what it would feel like if you were chained and not able to stretch or move freely. Paul was in that situation. Many others may have felt depressed in such conditions, but Paul was full of hope. Moreover, he encouraged everyone with messages of God's grace.

The filthy cell is dark. A thin shaft of light filters in from a window high above. The prisoner's thin clothing is not enough to keep out the chill of the cold, damp stone floor and walls. Heavy chains clank each time he moves. He is awaiting execution, and his pen scratches across the paper as he writes last letters of hope and encouragement to his friends.

This is not the first time Paul has been thrown into prison. His life as a messenger of God's grace has been hard. Lashed by the Jews five times; beaten with rods three times; stoned once; shipwrecked three times, once floating at sea for an entire day and night. His life has been one of constant danger—from the Jews, from the Gentiles, from rivers, from bandits, in the city, in the country, from unfaithful friends.

He has gone without sleep, without food, without water. He has been cold and naked. Prison is nothing new. Yet in every one of these situations Paul found the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus. Shipwrecked and stranded on the island of Malta for three months, Paul used the time to make converts. Imprisoned under house arrest in Rome for two years, he preached the gospel of grace to his guards and everyone else who came to visit him. His message was preached first to the slaves and the poor, but eventually it made its way up through the rich and to the household of the emperor.

Finally he was called to appear before Nero. The emperor was a man of unusual cruelty who ruled the entire civilized world with an iron hand. Those who dared to speak a word against him, including his own mother, were executed without mercy. He hated Christians and sent thousands of them to their death in Rome. When Paul was called to defend himself on charges of rebelling against the government, he had no reason to be hopeful. But God had other plans for Paul's court appearance, and He knew He could count on Paul to use the opportunity to witness for Him.

A Roman prisoner was allowed to bring someone to court with him to help argue his case, much like a lawyer does today. But no one was brave enough to appear before Nero with Paul.

"At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me," he wrote to Timothy (2 Timothy 4:16). "But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth" (verse 17).

In a court appearance that would make others tremble, Paul stood calmly in the crowded hall and presented the good news about Jesus. People from many lands listened in awe as he explained how Jesus came and paid the price to save us from our sins. Paul's words and the peace of Jesus that showed on his face converted many of the powerful and mighty who heard him that day.

Nero himself was influenced by Paul's speech and returned him to prison instead of throwing him to the lions in a public execution.

Nero eventually ordered Paul beheaded, but even on his way to his execution Paul preached the gospel of Jesus. Some of the soldiers who watched him die were moved by the Spirit of God as they listened to his grace-filled words.

Paul didn't complain that God had abandoned him as he sat alone in a filthy dungeon. His faith in his Savior was never shaken. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing," he wrote in his last letter to Timothy (verses 7, 8).

Paul was called to share God's message of grace in unusually difficult circumstances. But even in prison, even standing before one of history's most famous dictators, even on his way to his death, he found a way to share with others the good news about God's grace. He felt God's presence with him in even the worst of circumstances and used each to share his faith.

We don't know what our lives will bring. But God has promised to be with us no matter what lies ahead. "And surely I am with you always," Jesus promised (Matthew 28:20). It's a promise that we, like Paul, can take with us wherever we go.

KEY REFERENCES

- Acts 9:15, 16; Acts 20:24
- 2 Timothy 4:6-8
- *The Acts of the Apostles,* chap. 50, pp. 509-513
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 10, pp. 149-151 ("Fight the Good Fight")
- Our Beliefs, nos. 10, 17, 11

POWER TEXT

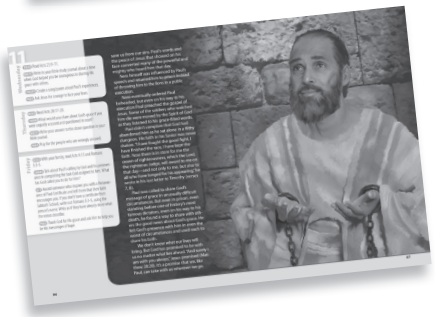
"Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you" (Acts 18:9, 10).

POWER POINT

We speak about God's grace wherever we are.







Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 88.

Sunday

READ Read Acts 9:15, 16, 20–24 and this week's story, "Keep Talking."

WRITE Write the power text, Acts 18:9, 10, on a stone to remind you of God's protection.

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, Acts 18:9, 10.

PRAY Ask God for strength to witness, even in difficult times.

Monday

READ Read Acts 16:22-34.

RESEARCH Trace Paul's second missionary journey on a map.

ANSWER What would you do if you were facing some of Paul's trials?

PRAY Ask for God's protection for people who face trials while sharing their faith.

Tuesday

READ Read Acts 21:20-40.

REFLECT How can your attitude reflect God's grace in difficult situations?

PRAY Ask God to help you share His grace even when you are falsely accused.

Wednesday

READ Read Acts 23:9-11.

WRITE Write in your Bible study journal about a time when God helped you be courageous in sharing His grace with others.

CREATE Create a song/poem about Paul's experiences.

PRAY Ask Jesus for courage to face your fears.

Thursday

READ Read Acts 28:17-20.

THINK What would you share about God's grace if you were unjustly accused and questioned in court?

WRITE Write your answer to the above question in your Bible journal.

PRAY Pray for the people who are wrongly accused.

Friday

READ With your family, read Acts 9:15 and Romans 5:3-5.

SHARE Talk about Paul's calling by God and his perseverance in completing the task God assigned to him. What has God called you to do for Him?

ACT Award someone who inspires you with a Perseverance of Paul Certificate and tell them that their faith encourages you. If you don't have a certificate from Sabbath School, write out Romans 5:3-5, using the person's name. Write as if they have already done what the verses describe.

PRAY Thank God for His grace and ask Him to help you be His messenger of hope.