

# LARGE GROUP WORSHIP *Session*

# 1



## PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

### Romans 1:1-17

Paul, as one of the first missionaries to the Gentiles, wrote this letter to the churches in Rome. It had been Paul's desire to travel to Rome and visit with the churches and the people he had never met. Several times in the book of Acts, Paul shared this desire.

Having ministered completely to the cities on the eastern side of the Roman territory, Paul sought to move westward to Spain, passing through Rome. After spending time in Ephesus, Paul moved on to Corinth where he likely wrote this letter. The purpose of Paul's writing was to share the truth of the gospel with those in Rome. Since Rome was the seat of government, the city would have had people of many nationalities and faiths.

Paul opened his letter by identifying his credentials. Some in Rome may not have known who Paul was, and Paul wanted to be sure those reading this letter would know that the words he was sharing were not from him but were from God. As an apostle, Paul had been called by God to share this truth—the truth of the gospel.

The gospel is what Paul takes the next 16 chapters of text to unfold. Knowing the Christians living in Rome were from a heavily Gentile background, Paul took great care to open the gospel to them in ways they would understand. The gospel in a nutshell is what Paul shared in Romans 1:1-5. The gospel is about Jesus Christ, descended from David, crucified and raised from the dead, through whom we have received God's grace. The good news of the gospel was not just for the Jews. It was for all people, and Paul fulfilled his calling to share that gospel with as many as he could.

Paul commended the church for the ways they were growing in their faith. Paul had heard good reports from many believers and wanted to continue strengthening the church's resolve. Paul assured the church of his continued prayer and encouraged them by sharing his own unashamed commitment to the gospel—the light by which the righteousness of God is revealed.

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Romans 1:1-17

**MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE:** Ephesians 2:4-5

**BONUS BIBLE VERSE:** Romans 1:16

**TEXT TRUTH:** The gospel reveals that it is through God's power that we are saved.

**CHRIST IN CONTEXT:** The book of Romans illuminates the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sin entered the world through one man—Adam—and spread to all people. The good news is that salvation also entered the world through one man—Jesus. This is how God showed His great love to us: God sent Jesus—while we were sinners—to die for our sin. Through faith in Jesus, we can receive His righteousness and be reconciled to God.

## PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

**BIBLE STORY PASSAGES:** Romans 1:1-17

*Paul was a follower of Jesus and a missionary. Paul wrote letters to believers and churches to help them understand how God wanted them to live. While Paul was in the city of Corinth and on the way to the city of Jerusalem, Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in the city of Rome. In Bible times, letters often began with the writer sharing his name and who he was. Paul began his letter by telling the people that he was an apostle and that God called him to share the gospel. Then Paul reminded the church that Jesus kept the many promises the prophets had made in Scripture. The prophets promised in Scripture that Jesus would come. Jesus would come from the family of David. Jesus came as fully human, but He also was fully God. Because of Jesus, we can receive grace and tell others about Jesus.*

*Then Paul explained that this letter was for those in Rome who were loved by God and called to be His people. Paul was thankful that he had heard about the faith of the Roman Christians. Paul shared that he was praying for the church constantly. He even prayed that he would be able to visit them one day if that was God's will. God had called Paul to share the gospel with all types of people—Jews, Gentiles, those who had been to school, those who had not been to school, the wise and the foolish. Paul really wanted to visit and share the gospel with the people in Rome.*

*Paul understood that people who do not believe in Jesus might think the gospel is strange. Some people might even think that the gospel was silly, but Paul was not worried about what these people thought. Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel." The gospel reveals that it is through God's power that we are saved. Paul also reminded the church that the followers of Jesus live by faith.*

*Paul wrote many, many things in his letter to the Romans because Paul wanted to help the Romans fully understand the gospel and how to live their lives in a way that brought glory to God.*

## WELCOME

- Say: “Hello everyone! I am so glad that you are here today.”
- Ask: “What are some of the ways that you greet your friends?”
- Guide the children to greet each other in different ways. Some examples might be high fives, hugs, and shaking hands. (*Option: Use greetings such as a wave or wink if you prefer to avoid physical contact.*)
- Say: “Those are wonderful ways to greet your friends in person. But if our friends are far away, we have to greet them in other ways.”
- Ask: “How could you say ‘hello’ to a friend who lives far away?” (*Allow the children to share some ideas.*)
- Say: “One way to show someone that you miss them and care about them is to send them a letter. Today, we are going to read a letter that Paul wrote to his friends in Rome. This epistle is called the book of Romans.”
- Reference the “Romans” Books of the Bible poster and guide the children through each question. Read the answers aloud with them.

## WORSHIP

- Say: “We are studying a new book of the Bible, which means we also have a new Memory Verse for the month. Reading the Bible aloud together is a wonderful way to prepare our hearts for worship.”
- Display the “Ephesians 2:4-5” slide.
- Guide the group to stand and read the verse out loud with you.
- Say: “God’s love is amazing! He offers us salvation and eternal life through His grace and mercy. Let’s take some time to tell God that we love Him by singing praises to Him!”
- Stand and sing “The Lord is My Strength and My Song.”
- Pray and thank God for the power of the gospel.
- Collect an offering while you sing “More Like Jesus” with the children.

## INTRODUCE THE SESSION

- Say: “In order to understand the book of Romans, we need to know who wrote it. Do you remember the writer’s name?” (*Paul*)
- Continue: “Yes! Paul wrote the epistle of Romans to the church in Rome.”
- Display the “Roman Forum” object slide.
- Say: “Our object for today is the Roman Forum. This was the place where Roman citizens would meet for big events. Ceremonies, courts of law, and even gladiator contests were held at the Forum. There were shops and markets all around so that people could buy things, too.”
- Ask: “Do you think that the Roman Forum was a busy place?” (*Yes*) “What are some of the sounds that you might hear in a busy place?” (*animals, feet, talking, yelling, music*)
- Say: “Rome was a very busy city with a strong army. They loved to show

### TOOL BOX

- Welcome: “Romans” (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Worship: “Ephesians 2:4-5” (slide), music videos (Video & Media Extras), offering basket
- Introduce the Session: “The Roman Forum” (slide), Option: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Dig Deeper: Bible, “The Gospel” (slide), “The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me” (Video & Media Extras), flashlight
- Practice Bible Skills: 66 large craft sticks, 10 insulated cups, permanent marker, “Books of the Bible” (slide)
- Missions: “Myanmar (Burma) Map” (Music & Print Extras)
- Review: blank copy paper, envelopes, crayons, “Text Truth 1” (slide)
- Closing: music videos (Video & Media Extras)

### MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

- The monthly Memory Verse is Ephesians 2:4-5.

off and to prove their strength. Paul wanted the Romans to see that God was more powerful than any army or government.

- Option: Show the Explore the Bible on Location video.

## DIG DEEPER

- Open your Bible and read Romans 1:1,7.
- Ask: “What does Paul call himself?” (*a servant*) “What is a servant?” (*a person who obeys and performs duties for another person*)
- Say: “Before he was saved, Paul was a Pharisee. He was focused on religious law and persecuted Christians for believing in Jesus. All of that changed when Paul received the gospel. Paul repented of his sin, put his trust in Jesus, and served Him.”
- Read Romans 1:8-12.
- Say: “Paul told the Christians in Rome that he thanked God for them. He also told them that he was praying for them and wanted to see them.”
- Ask: “Do you have any friends that you want to see really badly?” (*Allow the children to share.*) “Why do you miss them so much?” (*They love them.*)
- Say: “Paul wanted to see the Romans so they could all encourage one another. We all need Christian friends that will encourage us! Paul goes on to give the most important reason why he wanted to visit Rome.”
- Read Romans 1:15-17.
- Ask: “What is the gospel?”
- Display and explain “The Gospel,” or play “The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me” video.
- Ask: “Who does it say the gospel is for?” (*everyone who believes; the Jews and the Greeks*)
- Say: “The gospel is for the Jew and the Greek. The Jewish people are the nation of Israel, God’s chosen people. Do you remember when God promised Abraham that his children would become a great nation?”
- Continue: “The Jews were very religious people, and rules were very important to them. The Greeks did not follow the Jewish law. But the Bible says that the gospel is for the Jew and the Greek.”
- Ask: “What does that tell you about the gospel?” (*The gospel is for everyone.*) “What does that tell us about God?” (*God wants a relationship with all people.*)
- Say: “It does not matter where you are from or what you have done! The Bible tells us that God loves us and sent Jesus for us so that anyone who believes will not perish, but have everlasting life with Him.”
- Guide a child to find and read Romans 1:16-17.
- Say: “The Bible says that the gospel reveals the righteousness of God.”
- Ask: “What does the word *reveal* mean?” (*uncover or make known*)
- Turn on your flashlight. Use the flashlight to show different objects in the room. Use the word *reveal* every time that you shine the light on an object to help the children make the connection.

### BONUS BIBLE VERSE

- This week’s Bonus Bible Verse is Romans 1:16.

- For example: “This flashlight reveals the table.”
- Say: “The gospel is kind of like this flashlight! **The gospel reveals that it is through God’s power that we are saved.**”
- Ask: “What is righteousness?” (*holiness, a quality of someone who does right*)
- Say: “To be righteous is to do what is right. God is righteous because He always does what is right.”
- Conclude: “Did you know we can be righteous, too? When we respond in faith to the gospel, Jesus Christ gives us His righteousness, and we will get to enjoy God’s righteousness for eternity!”

## PRACTICE BIBLE SKILLS

- Before the session, write the name of each book of the Bible on a craft stick, and the names of the divisions of the Old and New Testaments on the insulated cups.
- Display the “Books of the Bible” slide. Invite the kids to recite the division names with you.
- Model for the children how to put a craft stick into the correct divisions cup.
- Distribute the craft sticks to the kids and invite them to sort their sticks into the correct cups. Allow children to work with partners as needed.
- Draw the group’s attention to the cup with Paul’s letters.
- Say: “Paul wrote letters to different churches. Did you know that these are not ordinary letters? These epistles are inspired and are actually God’s words.”
- Review the names of the books in the Paul’s Letters division.

### BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- Name the divisions of the Old and New Testaments.
- Identify the names of the writers of specific Bible books.

## MISSIONS

- Say: “Many years ago a man named Adoniram Judson was born in Malden, Massachusetts. He was the son of a pastor. As an adult, he felt God calling him to tell people in faraway lands about Jesus.”
- Continue: “Adoniram married a woman named Ann. They set sail with friends Samuel and Harriett Newell for Calcutta, India, in 1812.”
- Show the Myanmar (*Burma*) Map as you mention the long trip the ship would be making.
- Explain: “The missionary couples spent four months at sea. Adoniram studied the Bible along the way. Soon after arriving in India, the Judsons were forced to leave as the government did not want missionary work in India. The Judsons sailed on a ship to Rangoon, Burma.”
- Mention that the nation of Burma is now called Myanmar, and the city of Rangoon is now known as Yangon.
- Say: “Adoniram soon found a Burmese scholar who could teach him and Ann the Burmese language. After studying the language for about six

- months, the Judsons could talk with their Burmese neighbors.”
- Continue: “Adoniram spent almost 40 years in Burma translating the Bible and other Christian writings to the Burmese language and helping the Burmese people and people from the Karen tribe to know more about Jesus.”
- Ask kids if they can imagine being on a ship for four months.
- Explain that the voyage would have been challenging, but the Judsons trusted and obeyed God and were determined to tell people about Jesus.
- Pray, thanking God for people willing to go tell others about Jesus.

## REVIEW

- Give each child a piece of blank copy paper, an envelope, and some crayons. Help each child write *To:* on the top left corner of his envelope and *From:* on the bottom left corner of his envelope.
- Say: “We are going to write a letter to a Christian friend today. Think of someone who needs encouragement. It could be your pastor, a family member, a friend, or a teacher.”
- Help each child address his envelope.
- Ask: “Can you help me remember what Paul said in his letter to the Romans?” (*pause for responses*)
- Say: “Paul said that he was a servant of Jesus. He told his friends that he was thankful for them and that he was praying for them.”
- Allow the children to write or draw their own letters to their friends, but tell them to only use half of the page.
- Display the “Text Truth” slide.
- Say: “**The gospel reveals that it is through God’s power that we are saved.** The gospel is the most encouraging thing that you could share with a friend. Paul shared this truth in his letter. We must share it in our letters, too!”
- Instruct the children to stand and recite the Text Truth aloud with you: **the gospel reveals that it is through God’s power that we are saved.**
- Help the children write the Text Truth or another gospel truth on the bottom halves of their papers.
- Show the children how to fold their letters and place them in the envelopes.

## CLOSING

- Say: “Paul was a friend who cared enough about the Romans to share the gospel with them.”
- Pray, thanking God for encouraging friends and the power of the gospel. Pray for the children to know Christ and to be strengthened in their faith, then sing “Trust” with the children as they exit.